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Agri-News

January 3, 2000

Chronic tying-up in horses

Chronic tying-up is seen in many breeds of horses, including Quarter Horses, American Paint Horses, Appaloosas, Thoroughbreds, Arabians, Standardbreds and Morgans. Recurrent episodes, that can be brought on with even light exercise, seem to be especially predominant in fillies.

"Tying-up used to be erroneously blamed on training regimes," says Les Burwash, head of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie. "Recent studies and some specific, in-depth research into this condition in horses has helped identify several factors that could be at the root of the problem."

At the Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference, being held at the Capri Centre in Red Deer on January 7 to 9, 2000, Stephanie Valberg DVM PhD will be discussing this topic with horse enthusiasts.

"Valberg is an equine researcher at the University of Minnesota," says Burwash. "She is an authority on tying-up, having researched the condition in Thoroughbreds, Quarter Horses, Draft Horses and Warmbloods. Valberg will share findings of some specific causes of tying-up, that include a disorder of muscle contraction and a disorder in carbohydrate storage and utilization. There is also strong evidence to support that a hereditary link is involved in this disorder, something that breeders will be very interested in hearing about."

While presenting the possible causes of tying-up, Valberg will also present some of the dietary, exercise and stabling measures that can be taken to ease or even alleviate the condition in horses.

"Valberg is a strong supporter of standardizing daily routines and environmental factors to minimize stress on susceptible and affected horses," adds Burwash. "She maintains that looking to these factors and adjusting the diet to include a balanced vitamin and mineral supplement, high quality hay and a minimum of carbohydrates can have very positive results.

"Valberg's presentation promises to be very informative. We are very pleased to have her on our 2000 schedule of speakers at the conference."

The conference is an opportunity for horse enthusiasts to meet, share information and listen to the 13 featured internationally recognized speakers delivering a variety of presentations of benefit to breeders, competitors and owners alike. The event is arranged so that attendees can follow four streams of interest – Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred

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and all breeds. While many follow the program designed for a particular breed preference, conference participants can attend any of the sessions and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information, contact the Horse Industry Branch in Airdrie at (403) 948-8533, or in Edmonton at (780) 415-6107. Government numbers are toll free by dialing 310-0000 first.

Contact: Les Burwash
(403) 948-8538

Alberta New Crops Network is formed – a voice for the new crops industry

After several months of province-wide meetings, consultations and discussions we are very pleased to announce the official formation of the Alberta New Crops Network (ANCN). Representatives of several groups, including the Alpine Herb Growers; Native Plant Producers Association; Peace Value Added Food & Ag Association; Organic Crop Improvement Association; Alberta Ginseng Growers; Flower & Herb Growers Association of Alberta; Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; the Olds College Centre for Innovation; and, individual producers, have held meetings working towards the formation of an umbrella group. The mission statement of the new organization, which is registered under the not-for-profit Societies Act, is "to provide identity, marketing support, education and networking opportunities to our members for the development of the new crops industry in Alberta".

"This group has developed a clear vision of what the new crops industry requires if it is to reach its potential in this province," says Dr. Stan Blade, Leader of the New Crop Development Unit, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Director-at-Large of the Alberta New Crops Network. "The ANCN has the potential of leading this industry by providing an opportunity for producers, processors, marketers and retailers to come together and establish the primary elements that will lead to success in this diverse industry."

Trace Johnston has been elected to be the first president of this new organization, along with other executive officers and a board of directors. Johnston is also the owner of Bedrock Seed Bank, and past president of the Alberta Flower and Herb Growers Association prior to taking on the responsibility of leading and facilitating the development of the ANCN.

"By identifying barriers to growth and initiating infrastructure development, the ANCN plans to provide practical support and accelerated direction for new crops development in the province. The ANCN will provide a voice for all Albertans who have an interest in any aspect of crop diversification," says Johnston.

The ANCN executive has identified a number of goals which the organization anticipates that it will be able to provide to members:

- networking with growers, processors, marketers, buyers and sellers of new crops in Alberta
- enhanced industry collaboration
- identification of research and development priorities
- providing updated information on what is happening in the alternative crops industry
- organization of workshops and meetings, as well as education and training opportunities
- input into the development of standards and certification
- information on potential funding sources
- ANCN newsletter and directory

The ANCN board is continuing to develop strategic plans for the role that it intends to fulfill; it has established that this new organization has set the goal of being an organizational umbrella group for new crop producers, marketers, processors, agri-engineers, researchers and individuals interested in furthering research, quality standards, information and consumer awareness within the alternative crops industry in Alberta.

If you wish to join the ANCN, or would like further information about the group, you can contact:

Alberta New Crops Network
c/o Crop Diversification Centre North
17507 Fort Road
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T5B 4K3
Phone: (780) 415-2681 (Toll-free by dialing 310-0000)
Fax: (780) 422-6096

If you have any questions about this emerging group you can call Trace Johnston at (780) 448-1722 or Dr. Stan Blade at (780) 422-1789.

Contact: Dr. Stan Blade
(780) 422-1789
Trace Johnston
(780) 448-1722

Selling meat directly into restaurants

Have you ever thought about putting your premium meat, be it pork, lamb, fish, beef, poultry or bison on the plate of consumers in a high end restaurants?

"The food service industry, restaurants, hospitals, caterers, and other institutions, provides a logical place for many high end meat products to begin the journey through the marketing chain," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist-business with Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development, Westlock.

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"The demand for local product is there, but the current distribution system does not promote it," says Kristina White, Illuminet Business Development Group. "If the chef doesn't know about your product, how can he access it or put it on his menu."

Chefs are increasingly willing to buy direct from producers in order to find unique products or items that are difficult to purchase from distributors. Although some restaurants buy directly from growers hoping to get a lower price, chefs working for high-end restaurants are often willing to pay top dollar for hard-to-find items. For a top quality producer, prices may be high enough to justify the expense of delivering products directly to the restaurant.

"Products must be of top quality and freshness and be available as needed," says Engel. "Specialty products not available in wholesale markets are top sellers. Chefs also consider price, consistency and reliability of supply and delivery."

Selling direct to restaurants has several advantages:

- steady market throughout the production season
- advance orders allow you to harvest only what is already sold
- consistent price, often 10 per cent or more over wholesale
- personal contact with buyer
- flexibility in products grown
- *potential of* brand name *recognition of locally grown produce*

Possible disadvantages include:

- most practical if near large urban centre or tourist area
- frequent delivery required due to limited storage space in restaurant kitchens
- wide variety of products needed to justify delivery costs
- product liability insurance premiums may outweigh the profits

"If you are raising, poultry, pork, bison, beef, fish or lamb and feel you have a premium product that should be getting a premium price, the ***Finding New Markets and New Partners for Meat Products in Food Service*** program may be of interest," says Engel. "This program is a joint project between Alberta Agriculture and Illuminet Business Development Group."

Finding new markets will begin January 18, 2000 in Westlock and Athabasca. The program will run every Tuesday afternoon in Westlock and Tuesday evenings in Athabasca for eight weeks.

"Participation in *Finding new Markets* will require a major commitment on the part of participants," adds Engel. "During the program, attendees will: discover what the food service customer really wants and how to fill his/her needs; identify niche markets in food service; meet key contact and players in the food service industry; learn how to access the food service market; receive individualized coaching in the preparation of your marketing plan; and, develop strategies to assess challenges and obstacles."

For more information call Kerry Engel, Rural Development Specialist-Business at 349-4465 or dial 310-0000 for toll-free access.

Contact: *Kerry Engel*
(780) 349-4465

AgVenture workshops for 2000

Looking for new production and marketing alternatives but not sure where to start or what's right for the farm and family? AgVenture workshops are being offered throughout the province in 2000.

"The AgVenture workshops are sponsored by the Agricultural Business Management Branch and are organized by business development specialists with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development," says Jean Wilson, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "The goal of the workshops is to help farm families understand and assess diversification opportunities at an early stage."

As Len Bauer, a former University of Alberta agricultural economics professor, states in a 1998 paper titled ***Business Management Issues in Alberta's Expanding Primary Agricultural Sector*** that 'business development presupposes doing the right thing. It makes little sense to develop a business that contemplates the production of goods and services lacking economic potential.' Business failure rates range from 25 to 50 per cent in the first two years, so planning and evaluating the feasibility of a business is essential.

"Topics for the workshops vary with location, but the management information and the tools that participants will learn about are applicable to any diversification opportunity," adds Wilson. "Participants will benefit by learning to evaluate: where they want to be, the options, market risks and opportunities, and cash flow. The importance of markets and marketing will be emphasized. Farmers are usually most interested in production information, but without a market for a product – whether it's organic carrots, rea meat or borage – a new venture probably won't be profitable."

Experienced producers, business consultants and agriculture specialists will share ideas. Participants will have a chance to make new contacts, view displays and meet the people working in the industry. Registration information is available and depending on interest, contact:

Agri Tourism, Medicine Hat, January 20
– Linda Hawk, Alberta Agriculture (403) 529-3616

Alternative Livestock, Westlock, January 26
– Kerry Engel, Alberta Agriculture (780) 349-4465

Organics, Rocky Mountain House, January 27
– Lynn Stegman, Alberta Agriculture (403) 340-7010

Alternative Livestock, Special Crops, Wetaskiwin, February 1
– Marian Williams (780) 679-1210, Alberta Agriculture

Diversification into 2000, Lethbridge, February 1
– Jan Warren, Alberta Agriculture (403) 485-5116

Organics, Nanton, February 17
– Lori-Jo Graham, Alberta Agriculture (403) 625-1445

Alternative Livestock, Bonnyville, February 23
– Alberta Agriculture (780) 645-6301

Organics/Special Crops/Horticulture, Spruce Meadows, Calgary, February 26
– Donna Fleury, Alberta Agriculture (403) 948-8503

Organics, Rycroft, March 1
– Tim Keating, Alberta Agriculture (780) 837-2211

Organics, Westlock, March 8
– Kerry Engel, Alberta Agriculture (780) 349-4465

Organics, Olds, March 16
– Jackie Anderson, Alberta Agriculture (403) 843-2201

Organics, Hanna, March 22
– Jackie Anderson (403)843-2201 or Sandy Jones (403) 854-5500, Alberta Agriculture

Government of Alberta numbers are toll free by dialing 310-0000 first.

Contact: *Jean Wilson*
(780) 415-2146

Annual flower trials – 1999

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South (CDCS), Brooks, participated in a flower varieties trial with seed provided by Benary Seed Company, Goldsmith Seeds and All American Selection.

"The data presented is a summary of the observations from the trial site at Brooks, and is meant only as a guide to assist in choosing annual bedding plants, the performance of these varieties may vary in different situations," says Nigel Seymour, nursery crops technologist, CDCS . "The CDCS is located just east of the Town of Brooks, 190 km southeast of Calgary and 100 km northwest of Medicine Hat. CDCS is situated in a shallow glacial river valley in the semi-arid short grass section of the province. The soil texture of the Centre is variable, ranging from silty clay loam to sandy loam."

The trial area had well-rotted manure incorporated into the soil in fall 1998. The annuals were transplanted during the last week of May, 1999. The gardens were routinely maintained and irrigated as required. Evaluations were carried out on July 6, August 4, and September 2. The entries came from two seed companies, Goldsmith Seeds and Benary Seeds, as well as the All-America Selection winners.

"The floral display in the trial garden was less splendid this year due to cooler temperatures and rainfall well above the average for Brooks," says Seymour. "The first frost came on September 19 with temperatures dropping to minus 1.2 C. This date is a little later than the 30-year average date (September 14) for Brooks.

"This year some of the more exotic species such as flowering okra and tritoma performed very poorly compared to 1998 when they were excellent. Generally things were about two weeks behind last year's development with the exception of the pansies, which performed very well early and throughout the season."

"Each year the CDCS trials several varieties of flowers and other plants," adds Seymour. "These trials give greenhouse growers and Alberta gardeners a point of reference when deciding which varieties to plan for and try the following year."

For further information, check out the Alberta Agriculture website at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/crops/hort/flowers/introduc.html**>.

Contact: *Nigel Seymour*
(403) 362-1350

Agri-News Briefs

CHC annual general meeting

The Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association is hosting the Canadian Association of Professional Apiculturists annual meeting and the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Honey Council (CHC) on February 2 to 6, 2000 at the Radisson Hotel, Saskatoon, SK. The conference showcases the Canadian beekeeping industry by bringing together academic professionals, commercial professionals and hobbyists. It will be a chance to learn and share with some of Canada's top beekeepers and researchers and includes a research symposium on one of the conference days. Other topics under discussion include: marketing issues; mites and bees; factors involved in the French Bee Malady; test of indoor treatments on wintering colonies; botanicals for mite control; and a presentation from the Canadian Bee Research Fund. The full agenda is available on the CHC website at <**www.honeycouncil.ca**>. For further information, contact Heather Clay, executive secretary of the CHC at (403) 208-7141 or e-mail <**CHC-CCM@telusplanet.net**>.

Attention beekeepers

Nominations are now being accepted for the Fred Rathje Memorial Award. The award was established as a memorial to Fred Rathje, a honey buyer and plant manager at Bassano, Alberta. Rathje was secretary for the Canadian Honey Council (CHC) for many years. The fund was set up in 1984 and is awarded annually when a candidate meets the following criteria:

- must have made a significant positive contribution of innovative, creative and effective effort for the betterment of the bee industry of Canada during the past year;
- need not be directly involved in keeping bees;
- need not be a member of the CHC.

Nominations and supporting data must be submitted to the CHC prior to the Annual General Meeting, February 2 to February 6, 2000 being held in Saskatoon, SK. All nominations will be reviewed by the CHC president and committee members. Only one award will be made annually. Decisions of the committee are final. Please send nominations to Heather Clay, executive secretary of the CHC, Suite 236, 234 - 5149 Country Hills Blvd, N.W., Calgary, AB T3A 5K8 or e-mail the nominations to <**CHC-CCM@telusplanet.net**>.

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January 10, 2000

"Proven Past...Challenging Future"

Since 1945, the Agricultural Service Boards (ASB) has been considered the voice of agriculture at the municipal level. This year, the 2000 ASB Conference theme is ***Agricultural Service Boards: "Proven Past...Challenging Future"***. The conference is hosted by the Association of Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen (AAAF), Central Region.

"As an organization, the ASB has helped ensure that the significant contributions made by agriculture in the province have been noticed," says Bernie Yakimyshyn, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "Agriculture is a great contributor to the provincial economy and is a very important part of all Alberta rural municipalities."

As the next century beckons, the ASB has taken a hard look at their role in promoting agriculture and has made some significant changes to their mandate. "We are looking to foster better relations between urban and rural Albertans," says Kim Nielsen, manager of Agricultural Services, Municipal District of Clearwater, Rocky Mountain House. "One of our aims is to increase communication and understanding between urban and rural Albertans by involving school children in some of the activities the ASB undertakes. Young Albertans, for the most part, are very interested in the agriculture industry and the strides that are being taken by producers to ensure environmental sustainability, agricultural advancement and food safety."

At the 2000 Provincial Agricultural Service Board Conference, being held in Edmonton on January 25 to 27, the ASB is making a concerted effort to launch this new program by featuring some presentations specifically targeted to young Albertans.

"We have invited 24 Edmonton High Schools to each send two students to attend the keynote address, ***More Agriculture and More People, Can We Co-exist?*** by Dr. Gordon Surgeoner, professor at the University of Guelph, Environmental Biology," says Keith Boras, Agricultural Fieldman, AAAF, Lacombe County. "Surgeoner is a nationally respected speaker on this subject and we are pleased that he will be joining us at this year's ASB conference. The topic is of interest to students and adults alike. The high school students in attendance will have the chance to ask questions and make comments."

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For participating, each school sending representatives to the conference will receive $100 toward their graduation fund, sponsored by Growing Alberta. The participating schools will be sending reports back to ASB based on what the students learned. The reports received will help the ASB understand the issues and topics that are of specific interest to urban students, which will help them further refine their program and enhance meaningful dialogue with the next generation of consumers and decision makers.

Another feature at the 2000 ASB conference is a trade show where elementary school students from Grades 4 and 5 will be invited to visit. The trade show is being organized by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Agriculture in the Classroom Program.

"We are very pleased to be sharing this conference with some of Alberta's young people," adds Nielsen. "We hope they will learn a little bit more about agriculture in the province, a little more about the ASB, but more importantly, we hope to learn from them through this exchange of information and ideas."

Contact: Kim Nielsen
(403) 845-4444
Bernie Yakimyshyn
(780) 427-4224
Keith Boras
(403) 318-3311

Hydroponics in Alberta

Growing crops without soil always intrigues people, and every year several hundred calls on the subject are received by the greenhouse crop specialists of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

"Hydroponics is a method of growing plants without soil," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist at Alberta Agriculture's Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN), Edmonton. "Many people think that hydroponically grown plants don't need light or proper temperature to grow, but that's not the case."

Hydroponics can be defined as the science of growing plants without the use of soil but by use of an inert medium, such as gravel, sand, peat, vermiculite, pumice, rockwool and coir (coconut fibre). In some areas of the world where outdoor conditions permit, hydroponics can be practised in the field. In Canada, hydroponic production of crops is associated with controlled environment conditions in greenhouses.

"The yields of vegetable crops under greenhouse hydroponic conditions is far higher than field production and quality is also better because of environmental controls," adds Mirza. "Hydroponic production does require close attention to nutrient management and many aspects of plant handling.

"The most advanced type of hydroponic is the nutrient film system, where no growing medium is used to grow plants. The required nutrients are dissolved in water and the nutrient solution is run across the plant roots. This allows the roots to grow in the nutrient solution and fulfill all its nutrient requirements."

For people who want to understand the basics of hydroponic production, a publication called ***Greenhouse Cropping: Hydroponic Production Systems*** is available by contacting Mirza at the CDCN, (780) 415-2303.

Contact: Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza
(780) 415-2303
*email: **mohyuddin.mirza@agric.gov.ab.ca***

Alberta vegetable variety recommendations for commercial growers and market gardeners for 2000

Each year, more vegetable seed varieties are made available to growers. Varieties grow differently depending on soil type and condition, weather and length of growing season.

"Choosing seed based on suitability and yield is important," says Paul Ragan, vegetable specialist, at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South (CDCS), Brooks. "The CDCS does vegetable variety testing each year and have evaluated most crops to make variety recommendations."

Some of the varieties recommended by CDCS include the following:

Beans

- snap wax – Gold Mine, Gold Rush, Eureka, Goldkist
- green – Slimgym, Podsquad, Strike, Jade, Brio, Tema, Earliserve
- filet – Blenda, Rido, Nerina, Duel, Paloma, Nickel

Beets

- Detroit Supreme, Detroit Dark Red, Cylindra

Broccoli

- early – Major, Captain, Regal
- mid – Majestic, Landmark, Titlest
- late – Eureka, Arcadia
- very late – Triathlon

Brussels Sprouts

- Oliver, Prince Marvel

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Cabbage

- early – Parel, Stokes Early 711, Elisa, Fast Vantage, Red Express (red)
- mid-early – Head Start, Green Start, Meteor (red)
- mid – Bravo, Rio Verde, Blue Thunder
- storage (green) – Lennox, Brutus, Avalon, Galaxy, Bently, Transam,
- (red) – April Red, Rona Red
- Chinese (suey choi) – Optiko, Nestor, Manoka
- Chinese (bok choi) – Joi Choi, Bok Choi

Carrot

- baby – A & C Nantes, Earlibird
- nantes – (early) – Napoli, Bureau, Earlibird, Special Nantes, Presto; (late) – Lindoro, Nelson, Nandrin, Bangor
- imperator – (early) – Neptune, Flame; (late) – Caro Pride, Prospector, Choctaw, Ivanhoe, Cheyenne
- imperator x nantes – (early) – Eagle, Kamaran, Nevis; (late) – Berlanda
- cut and peel – (imperator) – Enterprise, Newport; (imperator x nantes) – Indiana, HM02

Cauliflower

- early – Siria, Minuteman
- late – Cumberland, Amazing, Fremont, Chieftan

Celeriac – Brilliant

Celery –(early) Tango; (late) Improved Utah 52-70, Ventura

Corn

- Se – (early yellow) – Sunray, Precocious, Sugar Buns; (mid yellow) – July Gold, Kandy King (early bicolor) – Geronimo, July Gem, Elation; (mid bicolor) – Tecumseh II, Sunset, Ivanhoe, Temptation, Seneca Tomahawk; (late bicolor) – Parfait, Encore
- Sh2 – (early yellow) – Northern SS, Colossal Yellow, Impulse, Krispy King, Sheba, ACS 6800; (mid yellow) – ACX 427, ACX200, Victor; (late yellow) – Golden Gourmet, Zenith, Bandit, Morning Star; (early bicolor) – Sweet Heart, Colossal, Top Notch, Monte Carlo; (mid bicolor) – Candy Store, Confection, Jumpstart, Madonna
- Ornamental – (mini) - Chinook, Wampum; (large cob) – Fiesta

Cucumber

- pickling – (spined) Bush Baby, Spear-It, Fancipak, Pioneer; (beit alpha spineless) Parmel, Floret
- slicing – (spined) Jazzer, General Lee, Speedway, Thunder; (beit alpha spineless) Paska, Sweet Crunch, Melita

Leeks

- Autumn Giant, King Richard, Ducal, Jersey

Lettuce

- cos (green) – Entrada, Green Tower, Pinokkio, Olga
- cos (red) – Rosalita
- leaf (green) – Aston, Two Star, Green Vision
- leaf (red) – Kamala, Cardindale, Red Line
- leaf (salad bowl) – Compass, Green Salad Bowl
- head – ABBA, Gemini, Queen Crown, Dublin

Melon

- watermelon – (yellow) – Yellow Baby,Cutie Yellow; (red) – Sugar Baby, Jade Star
- muskmelon – Earlydawn

Onion

- cooking – Spanish – Gold Cascade, White Keeper, Candy
- yellow – (early) – Norstar, Top Rock, Eskimo, Corona, Hawk, Wolf ; (mid) – Frontier, Mustang
- red – Mars, Southport, Red Globe
- white – Southport White Globe
- bunching – Emerald Isle, Feast, Kincho
- pickling – Barletta

Parsnip – Hollow Crown Imp., Arrow

Peas

- snow – Little Sweetie, Oregon Sugar Pod
- fresh market – (early) – Spring, Daybreak, Olympia; (late) – Knight, Patriot, Green Arrow

Pepper

- yellow – Goldie, Giant Szegedi, Albaregia
- green – Stokes Early Hyb., Cardinal, Shamrock, Parma, Redstart
- lime – Guantanamo
- purple – Lilac
- specialty – Surefire, Super Chili, Early Jalapeno, White Fire

Pumpkin

- fresh market – (large) – Autumn Gold, Spirit, Rocket, Jackpot, Fatboy, HMX4696, Houden Biggie; (small) – Baby Bear, Trickster, Oz, Little Lantern; (pie) – Rouge Vif D'Etamps, Small Sugar
- ornamental – Sweetie Pie, Baby Boo, Munchkin, Jack-B-Little
- hulless seed – Trickster, Snack R'Jack

Radish

- summer – Champion, Cherry Bell, Hunter, Tinto
- daikon – H.N. Cross, Gentoku

Rutabaga

- Laurentian

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Shallots

- Ambition, Matador

Spinach

- Unipack 12, Correnta

Squash

- summer – (green) Milano, Richgreen, Green Magic II; (white) Cousa; (yellow) Gold Finger, Gold Rush
- winter – (acorn green) – Table Ace, Ebony Acorn; (buttercup green) – Burgess Buttercup; (buttercup orange) – Ambercup
- kabocha – (green) – Kurinishiki, Tastie Delight, Naguri; (orange) – Full Glory
- delicious – (green) – Green Delicious; (orange) – NK530, Howard's Autumn, Golden Delicious
- spaghetti – (white) – White Fall, Spaghetti; (orange) – Orangetti, Hasta la Pasta
- banana – Pink Banana
- delicata – Carnival
- butternut – Zeneth, Early Butternut
- hulless seed – Szentesi Futo

Tomato

- red – (cherry) – Red Alert; (mid-size fruit) – Blazer, Brookpact, Roadside Red; (large fruit) – Northern Exposure, Bingo, Shady Lady; (paste) – Olinda, Red Hunter
- yellow – (mid-size fruit) – Taxi; staking – Big Beef, Ultra Sonic

For further information and additional recommendations, visit Alberta Agriculture's website at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/crops/hort/veg_recommendations.html**> or contact the CDCS in Brooks at (403) 362-1300. Government numbers are toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000 first.

Contact: *Nigel Seymour*
(403) 362-1350

Common sense recommendations for storing vegetables over winter

Alberta's climate in winter is so cold that it is necessary to store home-grown vegetables indoors over the winter. Many of the vegetables grown outdoors in the garden in summer make excellent candidates for storage. Their color, crispness and flavor can successfully be preserved for long periods of time if they are stored in the proper set of conditions.

"Vegetables that are suitable for storage can be separated into four main categories," says Jim Holley, post-harvest scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre – South (CDCS), Brooks. These categories are established based on the storage conditions required:

- cold humid – beets, carrots, parsnips and turnips;
- cool humid – potatoes;
- cool dry – squash and pumpkins; and,
- cold dry – onions.

"Homeowners rarely have access to more than one storage facility at a time, so storing a wide range of home grown vegetables can be a problem," says Holley. "The optimum temperature for storing potatoes is five to eight degrees Celsius, while carrots store best at one degree C. Carrots and potatoes lose flavor and crispness if levels of humidity in storage fall too low. On the other hand squash, pumpkin or onions decay extensively if levels of humidity are greater than 85 to 90 per cent."

Maintaining temperature at four to five degrees C and humidity between 70 and 85 per cent is a good compromise for the home gardener. Cool temperatures slow down the ripening process, inhibit sprouting, and prevent storage decay from developing. Vegetables that require moist conditions do not dessicate rapidly in storage facilities with moderate levels of humidity. Produce requiring drier conditions will not decay extensively either. Most vegetables can be store successfully for months at a time in storage facilities with these conditions provided that levels of temperature and humidity are steadily maintained. Significant fluctuations in levels of temperature and humidity will, however, significantly reduce shelf life and product quality.

Achieving levels of humidity as high as 70 to 85 per cent in storage is a common problem for the home gardener," adds Holley. "Vegetables, with the exception of potatoes, can be stored in perforated plastic bags to maintain their crispness. The floor of a storage can be sprinkled with a hose periodically, or a humidifier can be installed to increase levels of humidity."

Carrots, onions, parsnip, potatoes and turnips are almost invariably stored in commercial facilities with plenty of fans and air exchange ducts. Ventilation removes carbon dioxide, heat and odors from stored produce. Good ventilation also helps to prevent unpleasant flavors from developing. Potatoes in particular consume a lot of oxygen over the storage season. They develop a distinct bluish tinge to their flesh if oxygen levels fall too low. Consequently it is necessary to be sure that stale air inside of a home storage room is routinely exchanged with fresh air from outside.

For further information, contact Holley at, Alberta Agriculture Food & Rural Development, Crop Diversification Centre – South, S.S. #4, Brooks, AB T1R 1E6; phone (403) 362-1336; fax (403) 362-1326; or e-mail <holley@agric.gov.ab.ca>.

Contact: *Jim Holley*
(403) 362-1336

Marketing Your Agri-Tourism Venture

Most Albertans consider marketing tangible products like grain, fruit and vegetables and other food products, to be what the agriculture industry is all about. But when it comes to marketing the intangible, such as selling agricultural experiences to the tourism market, a whole new approach must be considered.

"Selling experiences is no easy task," says Sharon Homeniuk, rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Stony Plain. "The first thing usually realized in the tourism industry is that it is a business of bringing the customer out to the product, as opposed to taking the product to the customer. This means that what is being offered has to be pretty attractive in order to draw people out."

Whether the business is a market garden, a country vacation or simply offering farm tours, farm business owners quickly realize that one business standing alone can't offer the variety of activities and facilities that tourism customers want and need. Creative partnerships are necessary to offer the tourism customer reason enough to travel.

Throughout January, February and March, Alberta Agriculture is offering workshops on ***Marketing Your Agri-Tourism Venture*** across the province. Experienced operators will share marketing tactics that have and have not worked for them. New tools to market agri-tourism businesses will be discussed and information about what the new Travel Alberta has to offer small operators will be shared.

"Attending one of the workshops provides the chance to meet and network with other operators in your area," adds Homeniuk. "Attendees will also develop an understanding of the expectations of the customer who is seeking agri-tourism experiences. The workshop is a great place to learn about the components of a tourism package, and how to build packages based on agri-tourism experiences."

The workshops are scheduled for:

Edmonton – January 20
Fahler – February 16
Airdrie – March 2, and
Lethbridge – March 16.

Space is limited and pre-registration is necessary. For more information and to register, contact Homeniuk at (780) 963-6101. Government numbers are toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000 first.

Contact: Sharon Homeniuk
(780) 963-6101

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Agri-News Briefs

Greenhouse planning workshop

A one-day greenhouse planning workshop is scheduled for February 2, 2000, at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN), Edmonton. The workshop sessions include greenhouse location, site consideration, construction aspects, heating and ventilation. Other topics being covered are: what crops to grow, the economics of vegetable production and the basics of pest management. The workshop is sponsored by the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association and costs $40 per person to attend. The CDCN is located at 17507 Fort Road in Edmonton. For further information, contact Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, (780) 415-2303.

Direct seeding 2000

On January 13, 2000, a direct seeding seminar/workshop is being held at the Dunvegan Inn, Fairview. Farmers interested in reduced tillage, direct seeding, carbon credits, fall seeded canola, GMO's, powdery mildew in peas, pre-seeding spraying, and sulphur, will be interested in attending. John Bennett, a farmer from Saskatchewan and a director of the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association will be discussing the trading value of carbon credits to direct seeding farmers and how many dollars should they be worth. Dr. Adrian Johnston, P.Ag., western Canada director for the Potash and Phosphate Institute of Canada in Saskatoon, will be discussing direct seeding openers, row spacing, and fertilizer placement. Other speakers include Richard Guitard, P.Ag., Mike Hall, P.Ag., Garry Ropchan, Tom Staples, A.Ag., and Paul LaFlamme, P.Ag. Registration is $10 at the door. This seminar is sponsored by the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, PFRA, and the agriculture industry.

Basics of fertilizer and water management in greenhouse crops

A one-day seminar on the basics of fertilizer and water management in greenhouse crops is planned for February 16, 2000, at Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN), Edmonton. This workshop is designed especially for growers who are afraid of mathematical calculations. The basics of water and watering, fertilizing of greenhouse crops, including vegetables and ornamentals, will be covered. The seminar is sponsored by Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association and costs $40 per person. The CDCN is located at 17507 Fort Road in Edmonton. For further information, contact Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, (780) 415-2303.

Swine stockhandlers' workshop

John Behan, a swine management consultant and researcher from the UK, and George Foxcroft, a professor and researcher of swine reproductive physiology from the University of Alberta will lead discussions at the Olds Stockhandlers' Workshop. This year, the topic for the workshop is ***Conception Failure...The role of the boar, the female and management***. The focus of Behan's research is on boar and semen management. Foxcroft is known world-wide for his expertise in gilt and sow reproductive physiology and his work on management strategies for the breeding herd. Participants can expect to take an hands-on approach to the activities. The workshop is scheduled for January 18, 2000 at the Animal Science Building, Room 614, Olds College. Space is limited, so pre-registration is advised. Cost of the workshop is $30 for the first person from a farm and $25 for each additional person from the same operation. For further information, or to register, contact Michelle Follensbee, (780) 415-0828, fax: (780) 427-1057, Edmonton, or e-mail <**michelle.follensbee@agric.gov.ab.ca**>.

Agri-News

January 17, 2000

Alberta farmers to share $5.4 million in hail insurance rebates

Thousands of Alberta farmers who purchased 1999 hail insurance from Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) will receive a premium rebate totalling approximately $5.4 million.

"More than 8,100 hail insurance customers will receive the rebate thanks to an operating surplus in the program," says Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister Ty Lund. "Farmers can expect the premium rebate cheque to arrive in their mailbox over the coming weeks.

"The Hail Insurance program is a well run program – it's entirely self-sustaining and operates without government funding. When surplus funds remain at the end of the year, we're pleased to share them with those who paid the premiums. It's nice to be able to distribute these cheques in a year when many Alberta farmers had a tough time."

The policyholders' rebates totals 30 per cent of the premium paid for those who have not had a 1999 claim and 15 per cent for those who have.

Brian Manning, AFSC's president and managing director, says that fewer hail storms in 1999 was largely responsible for the operating surplus and resulting rebate to AFSC hail policyholders. "Although parts of the province received hail damage, as a whole, the province fared pretty well," he adds. "Of course, depending on the circumstances, we can't promise this type of rebate every year."

AFSC offers straight Hail Insurance to Alberta farmers as affordable one-peril coverage. Farmers insure up to a maximum dollar coverage per acre, with losses paid based on the percentage of hail damage that occurs.

AFSC is a provincial Crown Corporation that provides farmers and agri-businesses with financial services, including crop insurance, farm income disaster protection and farm and agri-business loans.

Contact: *Michael Lohner*
Executive Assistant to the Minister of
Alberta Agriculture *(780) 427-2137*
Merle Jacobson
Senior Manager, Insurance Services,
AFSC *(403) 782-8229*
(Alberta government numbers are toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000 first)

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Agronomy Conference 2000

Highlights for the New Millennium is the theme for this year's agronomy conference. The annual event, organized by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Agronomy Unit and Regional Advisory Services, is being held at the Delta Edmonton South Hotel, in Edmonton on January 19 to 20, 2000.

"The conference is offering a wide range of topics that are of interest to farmers, producers, farm managers and Alberta consumers," says Dr. Ieuan Evans, plant diseases research specialist with Alberta Agriculture's Agronomy Unit, Edmonton. "Of particular note is the morning sessions on January 19 dealing with genetically modified organisms (GMO). All perspectives, the pros and cons of this issue will be presented and discussed.

"The GMO issue is very controversial and a topic that the conference is pleased to offer for discussion. People's thoughts and feelings on this topic range from those who view GMOs as very serious and dangerous to those who align the issue along the same lines as the Y2K hoopla. Dr. Wilf Keller, research scientist at the National Research Council's Plant Biotechnology Institute, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, has been invited to speak on *Genetically Modified Canola*; Dr. Jennifer Zantinge, research scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Lacombe, will present *Current Trends in Genetically Modified Cereals*; Steve Snyder, Organic Growers, will present the *Organic Grower's Perspective on GMOs*; and Cam Klapstein, grain farmer and chairman of the Alberta Canola Producers Commission, Nisku, will present *GMO Canola vs Conventional Canola - A Farmer's Perspective*."

The two-day conference also covers topics such as emerging crops – market and major issues; forage and fibre; insects – forecasting and mapping; herbicides and weed management; crop diseases and crop rotations; and, current crop production research.

"The conference has applied to the Prairie Certified Crop Advisor Program (CCA) for 10 CCA continuing education credits for conference attendance. These 10 credits can be applied toward the annually required upgrading information credits to maintain CCA status.

Registration for the conference is $85 per person (plus GST) and registration can be paid for at the door.

For further information, contact Lorraine Kohlman, Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton, at (780) 422-1318 or e-mail <lorraine.kohlman@agric.gov.ab.ca>.

Contact: Dr. Ieuan Evans
(780) 422-0719

Greenhouse crops industry in Alberta

The size of the Alberta greenhouse industry heading into 2000, is estimated at 9.2 million square feet, approximately 212 acres or 86 hectares.

"Alberta's greenhouse industry is the fourth largest in Canada," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crop specialist at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North, Edmonton. "There are about 400 growers involved in the business of growing vegetables, bedding plants, cut flowers, potted ornamentals and tree seedlings. The value of the industry is estimated to be around $75 million."

Preparations for the spring crop started in November when growers removed the older crops and cleaned the greenhouses.

"Scheduling vegetable crops depends upon what one wants to grow," adds Mirza. "One must understand that among the three commonly grown vegetables, cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers, cucumbers are the fastest growing, followed by tomatoes and then peppers. Peppers can take up to 130 days from seed to harvest while cucumbers will take about 60 days and tomatoes take about 110 days."

Scheduling information is important from income and expenditure view point. For example there would not be any income during the period from seeding to the beginning of the harvest.

There are more than 250 different types of bedding plants grown in Alberta and preparations start in November when begonias are seeded for April-May flowering.

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has maintained a strong extension and research component to serve the industry. The Crop Diversification Centre South at Brooks and Crop Diversification Centre North in Edmonton are involved in helping this industry to grow and prosper.

"Greenhouse crops industry is a growing sector of Agriculture in Alberta. A steady, balanced growth is needed in the future," says Mirza.

Contact: Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza *Jim Calpas*
(780) 415-2303 *(780) 362-1312*

Summer Employment Program for Alberta's Processing Industry

The *Agricultural Processing Industry Employment Program* provides career-related experience and skill training to students employed in Alberta's processing industry from May 1 to August 31. Processors who hire a student for the summer are reimbursed for one-third of the employee's salary, up to $500 per month.

"The APIEP is funded by Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) and administered by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development," says Christine Paproski, with Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton. "It began in the summer of 1996. Pending confirmation of funding from AHRE at the beginning of March, the program will be running again in the summer of 2000."

Employers must be the owner of a value-added processing business, located in Alberta. Students must be attending a post-secondary institution, enrolled in a degree, diploma, or certificate program (returning to school in the fall), and may not be a relative of the employer. Employment must provide career-related experience for the student and must be full-time for at least four, continuous weeks within the program period.

"The program is valuable for both the processor and the student," adds Paproski. "Companies are able to hire qualified summer help at reduced cost and students gain valuable experience that may help them in attaining future employment."

Over 200 processors in the province were sent an Application Package on January 4, 2000. Employers have until the end of April to recruit a student and submit their completed application.

For more information on the APIEP, or to obtain an Application and Program Guidelines, call Paproski in Edmonton at (780) 427-3124.

Contact: *Christine Paproski*
(780) 427-3124

Meat marketing basics for food service

Marketing a product is often the stage when many producers run into difficulties. Growing a product and processing it are often steps taken without any undue problems or consternation. Marketing the product, on the other hand, creates stumbling blocks for many Albertans.

"Marketing is for the most part based on common sense combined with a little initiative and work," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Westlock. "There are many resources Alberta processors can access for help with marketing. The rural development specialists with Alberta Agriculture would be happy to help get the right information into processors hands."

To give an example, here are eight tips for those interested in accessing the food service industry with their meat products:

1. **Plan Ahead** – do your market research. Starting to market your product the week before you slaughter is not the way to do it. Develop your marketing strategy before you start producing.

2. **Know Your Customer** – have you looked at a menu from the MacDonald Hotel?

   Here's a sample from the Mac's fall menu: Oven Roasted Grain Fed Veal Tenderloin, Char broiled Cutlet of Alberta Wild Boar, Pan Flashed Peppered Saskatchewan Venison, Maple Lacquered Hamilton's Grass Fed Duck Breast. Unique products raised especially for hi-end consumption.

   Traditional agriculture is production based. The philosophy being, *I will produce it and then find someone to buy it*. You need to change your perspective and take a *market focus*. You need to understand who is buying your product, you need to talk to them. You need to know what the chef's want – then you start producing!

3. **Know Your Regulations** – at the minimum you will need to have your products slaughtered and processed at a provincially inspected facility to access food service. Federal inspection is becoming standard with many chefs. Packaging and labeling regulations also need to be addressed.

4. **Differentiate Your Product** – you need to decide what strategic advantage your product has; is it grass-fed, pastured, antibiotic-free? You need to identify what your product is and why it is valuable. All of the promotional tools you develop need to relay this message too.

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5. **Price it Right** – you need to get out of the pattern of allowing the going market price to determine what you sell your product for. Essential to your marketing plan are the costing and pricing strategies you develop.

6. **Team up to Market** – many of the markets you uncover while investigating food service may be too big for one producer to supply. Co-operative marketing may be an alternative marketing strategy.

7. **Don't Abandon Your Customer** – many producers look for alternative markets like selling direct to the consumer when commodity prices are low. When prices rise they completely forget about their clients. When and if commodity prices rise you will have to address the issue in your business plan.

8. **Sign up for Finding New Markets and Partners for your Meat Products in Food Service** – if you are interested in accessing food service you will want to take this comprehensive, eight week course on developing your food service marketing plan. It is intended for those raising bison, beef, pork, chicken, lamb or fish. Meet key players, identify niche markets and receive individualized coaching.

For further information, contact Kerry Engel, rural development specialists - business in Westlock at (780) 349-4465.

Contact: *Kerry Engel*
(780) 349-4465

Organic agriculture workshop

A two-day workshop, featuring Carroll Montgomery from the Christian Agriculture Stewardship Institute in Dexter, Missouri, is planned for two locations in Alberta.

"Montgomery has been researching and testing various natural biological programs alongside the traditional chemical farming practices for 20 years," says Walter Walchuck, director of – spell out full name please – (OCIA), Edmonton. "He assisted with an organic field day held in Alberta in July 1999, and at these workshops, will share more of his knowledge and experiences."

The workshops will address both human health and farm (land) health. As organic agriculture continues to attract more and more supporters, it is essential that Albertans wanting to make the switch to organic farming have good information and resources to consider.

"Montgomery is a graduate of Southeast Missouri State University and was employed by the University of Missouri Extension Division for three years," continues Walchuck. "He returned to the family farm in 1972, but when faced with increasing weed, disease and insect problems even after applying the newest technologies and practices, started to develop a natural balanced nutrient program for his soil. From these practices and his field research plots, emerged the Christian Agriculture Stewardship Institute."

"The demand for naturally grown, organic products and grass fed meat products is increasing and many Alberta producers are seriously considering organic agriculture," adds Mike Dolinski, organic marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and chair of the Alberta Organic Food Committee, Edmonton. "The development of the new Canadian Organic Standards has made requirements for organic certification much clearer and easier to understand. Now producers need information from producers who have organic growing experience in the field. For producers contemplating conversion to organic production, these workshops will offer some very valuable, first-hand, practical information."

Organic Agriculture is being offered in **Lethbridge on February 3 and 4, 2000**, sponsored by Dave Le Pine, Seven Star Bio Ag Ltd., Lethbridge, and in **Westlock on February 7 and 8, 2000**, sponsored by OCIA Alberta #1 and Dave Le Pine, Seven Star Bio Ag Ltd., Lethbridge. Attendance fee is $20 for members of an organic certifying body; $35 for non-members and $5 for each additional person from the same household.

For further information or to register for the Lethbridge workshop, contact Dave Le Pine at (403) 320-0555 or 1-800-301-1105.

For further information or to register for the Westlock workshop, contact Irene at (780) 675-5478; Don at (780) 902-2733; or Walter Walchuck at (780) 434-4123.

Information on the Canadian Organic Advisory Board (COAB) and on the OCIA Alberta will also be available at the workshops.

Contact: *Walter Walchuck* *Mike Dolinski*
(780) 434-4123 *(780) 422-4873*

Agri-News Briefs

Sustainable crop production management

The Westerner Park in Red Deer will host FarmTech 2000, three information-packed days of education seminars and focused industry trade show exhibits, on February 2, 3 and 4, 2000. Over 50 speakers, many special events and three producer organizations annual meetings round out the event. The Seminars and presentations featured are arranged to follow seven subject streams: pulse crops; canola; reduced tillage; market outlook and strategies; technology development; agriculture issues; and, fall crops and value chains. The Alberta Conservation Tillage Society annual meeting will be held on February 2, the Alberta Canola Producers Commission annual meeting and the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission annual meeting will be held on February 3. Registration for the full workshop is $150 per person or $240 for a farm pair. Registration for only two of the three days is $110 per person or $170 for a farm pair. Single day rate is $60 per person and $90 for a farm pair. Student rates are $30 for the full workshop $15 for each day. For further information or to register, contact the workshop organizers at (403) 572-3600 or 1-800-251-6846 (Alberta only); fax (403) 572-3605; e-mail **<acts@telusplanet.net>**. For a full workshop agenda, visit the FarmTech website at **<www.FarmTechConference.com>**.

Endurance horse seminar

The Trail Riding Alberta Conference and Endurance Riders of Alberta are hosting a one-day seminar, ***Equine Development, Conditioning and Rehabilitation for Endurance and Strength*** on February 6 at the Red Deer College Amphitheatre. Dr. John Jaques, equine veterinarian practitioner, and Dr. Bill Crawford and intern, Shawn Mattson from Young-Crawford Veterinary Services Ltd, Ontario, are the guest lecturers being featured at the seminar. Topics under discussion will include: tissue structure and development, body systems-development and conditioning; conditioning for endurance; conditioning for strength; condition testing; and, developing a conditioning program; injuries and rehabilitation. A panel discussion including the guest lecturers, and national and international competitors will be held following the presentations. There is no charge to attend the seminar. For further information or to register, contact Grace Cottreau at (403) 931-1892.

Berry production school

Registration for the 2000 Berry Production School must be received prior to January 21, 2000. The school is being held on January 25 and 26 at Sandman Inn, Edmonton. This year's school focuses on direct market berry crops and includes information on farm set-up, customer expectations, site selection, signage, equipment suppliers and information sources. Crop specific information on varieties, plant requirements, spacing, irrigation, fertility and the latest pest and weed control recommendations will be provided for strawberries, raspberries and saskatoon berries. For further information or to register, contact the Alberta Market Gardeners Association (AMGA) at (403) 362-1309.

Greenhouse planning workshop

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN) is holding a Greenhouse Planning Workshop on February 2, 2000 at the CDCN in Edmonton. The workshop, sponsored by the Alberta Greenhouse Grower Association, includes discussions and information on greenhouse location, site considerations, construction aspects, heating and ventilation systems. Also on the agenda are discussions on what crops to grow, basic cultural practices for vegetables and flower crops and insect and disease management. Registration for the workshop is $40. For further information or to register, contact Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza at the CDCN, (780) 415-2303.

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Agri-News

January 24, 2000

Alberta Century Farm & Ranch Award

They settled the land and built the family farm or ranch. They have worked hard for years and still have energy and unrelenting faith. Their spirit and vision is what brought them to Alberta and made it home. They are Alberta's Century Farmers and Ranchers.

"Since 1992, over 130 Alberta farm and ranch families have been awarded the ***Alberta Century Farm & Ranch Award***," says Bard Haddrell, director of communications, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "The criteria for this award has been set to identify the many century farms and ranches in Alberta and acknowledge their significant, on-going contribution to the province."

To be eligible:

- your land must be continuously owned and actively farmed or ranched by your family for 100 continuous years or more
- you can provide evidence clearly demonstrating the kinship ties between you and the founder of the farm, ranch or homestead
- you can provide the legal land location
- you can provide the date of homestead establishment
- you can provide the ownership land title
- the size of the original homestead and current related size must be at least 160 acres of land

The 100 years should be calculated starting from the time the land was occupied for farming or ranching, in some cases this may have been before the homestead title was issued. Land that has been rented to persons outside the family during the 100 years is ineligible for an award. Rental property is also ineligible. Homestead documents can be searched at the Provincial Archives of Alberta or you can phone the Archives and request that they do a search for you. There is a small fee for this service. The address of the Archives is: Provincial Archives of Alberta, Reference Desk, 12845 - 102 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5N 0M6; phone (780) 427-1750 or fax (780) 427-4646. Alberta Government phone numbers are toll free by dialling 310-0000 first.

"Keeping a farm or ranch from generation to generation is an impressive achievement and this award is one way the Government of Alberta chose to recognize these special

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

families," adds Haddrell. "Eligible families will receive a bronze plaque, commemorating this 100-year milestone."

This award is a testament to the modern farm and ranch family and the Alberta Government's confidence in the families' ability to continue overcoming the constant challenges to remain on the land.

Families who meet the requirements should contact Lillian Chan at (780) 422-0492 for an application form. Eligible applicants will be contacted by their MLA and presented with a Century Farm & Ranch plaque, saluting the enduring contribution they have made to Alberta's economic success.

Contact: Bard Haddrell
(780) 427-5312

Marketing directly to the customer

A fall farm pumpkin festival, a U-fish trout pond and a booth featuring preserves at an Alberta Farmers' Market are all examples of a selling technique known as direct marketing. It is an old method that is enjoying a resurgence in popularity.

"One of the advantages of marketing direct is the immediate personal interaction between the producer or processor and the consumer," says Karen Goad, agrifood specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Grande Prairie. "This link provides immediate feedback on the product, and that opens up the opportunity to adjust the marketing and production plans to meet customer needs. The face-to-face interaction also allows the seller to provide additional information about the product or its use that may not fit on the product label or packaging. Perhaps best of all, it provides immediate payment. With the producer/processor taking all marketing responsibilities, there is no middle man which means more dollars going directly to the producer."

The primary limitation of this marketing method is production, processing and sales volumes. The ability to expand a business is limited by the available time because the same person is responsible for all aspects of the operation. It is important to determine the best proportion of time to spend on production, processing and sales commitments.

Alberta Agriculture's agrifood and rural development specialists launched a multi-year provincial program to help rural producers and processors overcome the challenges they face in direct marketing, expand their customer base, increase sales and maximize their direct marketing business potential.

"This program includes media promotions, educational seminars and new resource development," adds Goad. "A provincial conference and tours for direct marketers is also being investigated. A series of news columns featuring different aspects of direct marketing has already begun, and two new factsheets on direct marketing are being finalized."

These factsheets highlight trends, market opportunities, success factors, regulations and provide detailed resource lists. ***Direct Marketing for Rural Producers*** is available now. ***Farm Direct Sales: Know the Regulations*** will be available from district offices in late February or early March. Direct marketers should have received the first issue of a new industry newsletter, ***Direct From Farm to Consumer***, in their mailboxes in the next couple of weeks. Anyone who doesn't receive a copy and would like to be added to the subscription list, should call one of Alberta Agriculture's specialists (listed).

"Forty-two rural producers and processors recently shared their direct marketing wants and needs through four focus groups," continues Goad. "Some of the direct marketing issues they identified were: developing a business image, promotional plan and business signage; access to farmers' markets; and, regulations and marketing strategies."

Alberta Agriculture specialists are working with direct marketers to establish informal networking groups and assess the feasibility of developing regional directories or other joint marketing ventures that benefit direct marketers as a whole. In addition, a program of activities that address specific regional direct marketing issues will be developed and implemented over the next year.

A set of one-day workshops will look at the ins and outs of direct marketing. They are being held on: February 10 in Lethbridge, February 22 in Strathmore, March 15 in Morinville, March 16 in Camrose and March 26 in Medicine Hat. A nominal registration fee will be charged. The program content is the same for each location and features sessions on direct marketing methods, rules and regulations, trends, developing powerful promotional plans and an industry panel. Registrants will receive a copy of the publication ***Direct Marketing – A Handbook for Rural Producers***.

For further information on direct marketing or any aspect of our direct marketing venture, contact an agrifood or rural development specialist – business.

Alberta Agriculture's agrifood specialists:

Karen Goad	Grande Prairie	(780) 349-4465
Joyce Lencucha	Red Deer	(403) 340-5258
Sue Tenold	Airdrie	(403) 948-8504
Karen Hoover	Lethbridge	(403) 381-5814

Alberta Agriculture's horticulture development officer:

Betty Vladicka	Edmonton	(780) 415-2305

Alberta Agriculture's business development unit:

Jean Wilson	Edmonton	(780) 415-2146

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Alberta Agriculture's rural development specialists – business:

Kerry Engel	Westlock	(780) 349-4465
Lori-Jo Graham	Claresholm	(403) 625-1445
Lisa Houle	Hanna	(403) 854-5500
Sharon Homeniuk	Stony Plain	(780) 963-6101
Tim Keating	Falher	(780) 837-2211
Morley Kjargaard	St. Paul	(780) 645-6301
Donna Fleury	Airdrie	(403) 948-8537
Janice McGregor	Morinville	(780) 939-4351
Leona Reynolds-Zayak	Vermilion	(780) 853-8101
Linda Hawk	Medicine Hat	(403) 529-3616
Lynn Stegman	Lacombe	(403) 782-3301
Jan Warren	Vulcan	(780) 485-2236
Marian Williams	Camrose	(780) 679-1210

Alberta Government numbers are toll free by dialling 310-0000 first.

Contact: *Karen Goad* *Betty Vladicka*
(780) 538-5629 *(780) 415-2305*

Agri-tourism – what does Alberta have to offer?

Agri-tourism is a relatively new and growing sector. It marries two of Alberta's largest industries – agriculture and tourism. An increased interest in fresh, nutritious foods; a desire to revive the link to our farming roots; and, a fascination with the nostalgia of farming and rural communities; have given rise to this new and emerging agricultural scene. This new agriculture is more consumer focused and is closely linked to the demands, needs and interests of today's consumers. Agri-tourism is value-added agriculture, it's farm direct marketing, and it's a valuable educational tool.

Alberta has a lot to offer the consumer in terms of agri-tourism based experiences," says Sharon Homeniuk, rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Stony Plain. "Farmers' markets, market gardens, garden centres and greenhouses are only what the horticulture sector contributes to agri-tourism. There are also farms offering: country vacations, farm tours, farm festivals, activities like horse back riding and u-fish ponds, as well as educational activities and school tours. One challenge this growing industry has, is in getting a handle on all the specific farms and agricultural businesses that cater to this new agri-tourism consumer."

This winter Alberta Agriculture is developing a database of what Alberta has to offer in the way of agri-tourism ventures. Rural development specialists will be calling agri-tourism business operators from across the province and asking them if they would like to be listed on the database. The database will then be put up on the Alberta Agriculture's internet website at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca**>. The database will allow agri-tourism business owners to search out other operators in their geographic areas to partner and market with. It will also give tour companies an at a glance listing of what's available for agricultural tours in the province. The information will also be used by Travel Alberta for their 1-800 operators and Visitor Information Centres

"This database information will be added to Alberta Agriculture's new Agricultural Fairs and Rural Tourism publication," adds Homeniuk. "It is hoped that many of our agri-tourism operators, once called in early 2000, will take advantage of this opportunity to be included on the **Agri-Tourism Database!**"

For more information on the **Agri-tourism Database** and other agri-tourism related initiatives, call Homeniuk (780) 963-6101 or e-mail <**sharon.homeniuk@agric.gov.ab.ca**>.

Upcoming Workshops:

- **Setting Up Rural Accommodations** – February 23, 2000, Stony Plain. For more information on this workshop, call or e-mail Homeniuk
- **Direct Marketing Conference (Selling Direct to the Consumer)** – March 15, Morinville. For more information on this workshop, call Janice McGregor, rural development specialist, Morinville, (780) 939-4351 or e-mail <**janice.mcgregor@agric.gov.ab.ca**>

Alberta Government phone numbers are toll-free by dialling 310-0000, first.

Contact: *Sharon Homeniuk*
(780) 963-6101

December temperatures unseasonably high

For four months in a row, from September to December, temperatures have been near to above normal in Alberta. The provincial monthly average temperature of -4.0 degrees Celsius was 7.1 degrees above the 1961 to 1990 normal.

All Alberta stations reported above normal temperatures. The northwest region reported the greatest temperature departure, with an average temperature of -3.8 degrees C, or 8.6 degrees above normal.

"December began with above normal temperatures, that continued until the third week of December, when cold Arctic air descended on the province," says Shane Chetner, acting agricultural weather resource specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "The final week of December brought spring-like conditions to the province, with daily maximum temperatures reaching about 20 to 25 degrees warmer than average. December 27th was the

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warmest day of the month, with temperatures as high as 20 degrees in south western sections of the province."

The provincial average precipitation of 10.6 mm was 46 per cent of the 1961 to 1990 normal of 20.0 mm. Near to below normal precipitation totals have been the norm in Alberta for the past 5 months.

"Peace River Airport, with 20.4 mm of precipitation, was the only station reporting above normal precipitation," adds Chetner. "On the dry side, Camrose reported only 1.0 mm of precipitation, about 4 per cent of normal."

The provincial averages are based on Environment Canada data recorded at 56 locations across Alberta.

For more information, contact Chetner at (780) 427-3615, or visit the Alberta Agriculture internet site at **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca>**.

Contact: Shane Chetner
(780) 427-3615

Man's best friend should be livestock's best friend, too

Dogs can be wonderful members of the family, especially farm and ranch families. They can perform a multitude of functions from helping herd livestock, protecting livestock and farm property to doing what they do best, keeping their owners company and providing unconditional love and support.

What happens, however, when some members of this canine community attack instead of protect livestock? What actions should be taken, and who is ultimately responsible for the loss that can be incurred?

"Most dogs are good citizens, and that's a point that must be made from the outset," says Wray Whitmore, sheep specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "Whether it's city-dwelling dogs that are exercised near the University of Alberta farms or taken to rural areas for a day of play, or farm dogs, the onus is on the owners to make sure that their dogs will not chase, run-down or attack other livestock. If owners aren't sure how their dogs will react to a flock of sheep, a herd of goats or a gaggle of geese, err on the side of caution and keep the dog or dogs on leash and under control."

There is a pure poetry watching dogs that have been trained to herd or corral livestock. These skills are not just present in all dogs, they are skills that are taught if the natural instinct exists in a dog.

"There are fines for dog owners who let their dogs run at large and more serious repercussion should a livestock attack incident occur," adds Whitmore. "It is up to dog owners to make sure their pets don't get into situations that they don't know how to react to. It is very exciting to get a herd all stirred up and running and the situation can quickly escalate out of control. Take the necessary steps to ensure this doesn't happen. The pain suffered by the livestock is unnecessary and can be avoided with a little fore-thought and preventative action."

Contact: Wray Whitmore
(780) 422-0575

What to grow?

"What should I grow this year?", is the question most commonly asked of crop specialists at this time of year. It is a question that has become increasingly hard to answer over the last few years.

"Probably the most solid advice is to not change too much, too fast," says Gordon Frank, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Brooks. "Trying to push rotations too quickly is very risky and doesn't usually spell success. A good crop rotation that is reasonably flexible works the best over the long run."

The farming region being worked is also a big consideration. Know what crops respond well in a given climatic zone or under irrigation. Alfalfa hay, timothy hay, alfalfa seed, canola, pasture and grass seed do well on irrigated lands and prefer generally warm dry harvest conditions.

Wheat, barley, peas, flax, potatoes and sugar beets grow well in many areas of the province and are a fit because of the need to rotate crops. With good management, these crops can be fairly profitable most years.

"In Alberta, the crops that can produce more variable results include: corn (especially for grain), dry beans, sunflowers, chick peas, herbs, spices and essential oil crops," says Frank. "It's not that these crops don't grow here, but there is more chance of crop failure due to weather. Additionally, if they do grow well, there are higher costs of production relative to potential returns. This is partly because these are not generally well established crops in this area and the infrastructure to handle them and process them is not readily available."

The cornerstone crops should be chosen from the list of those that have proven themselves over the long run in Alberta. "With the number of hay acres that have come out, this may be the year to seed alfalfa," adds Frank. "The Asian recovery will help processed hay and timothy sales. Canola price is down, but producers can compensate some with the good yields being experienced. Canola acres get cut quickest in dryland areas if seeding conditions are dry or a drought develops."

When moving into the rotation crops, fertilize for high protein wheat. Barley can help cash flow. When considering some of the more specialized crops, such as potatoes, it may be advisable to consider renting some of the land out to a

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producer who already has the equipment needed to successfully grow, harvest and store these types of crops.

"Remember to start slow, develop your expertise and build your markets," says Frank.

A direct seeding seminar is planned for the Brooks area on January 31, 2000, at the Heritage Inn, Brooks. For more information or to register, contact the Brooks district office at (403) 362-1212.

Contact: Gordon Frank
(403) 362-1212

Agri-News Briefs

Finding agreement on difficult issues

Workshops on Finding Agreement on Difficult Issues: Constructive Collaboration for Communities, are being held throughout the province in February and March, 2000. The workshops are designed for rural and urban councillors, municipal employees and board members to provide the tools participants need to reach agreement on contentious and complex issues in their communities. Participants will gain a basic understanding of conflict and conflict management; understand the design and management of consensus based decision making; learn new skills to handle conflict in ways that will help resolve issues and build relationships; and, reduce the time, costs and stress associated with conflict resolution. The two-day workshops will be held in Grande Prairie on February 11 and 12; in Edmonton on February 16 and 17; in Lethbridge on February 24 and 25 and in Calgary on March 2 and 3, 2000. Cost of the workshop is $50 per person (price includes GST). Early registration is recommended as space is limited. For more information, contact Bill Diepeveen, mediation services coordinator, Alberta Municipal Affairs, Edmonton (780) 427-2225 or Laura Lee Billings, rural development specialist – organizations, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Three Hills (403) 443-7101. To register, phone 1-800-387-6030.

Seedy Saturday 2000 events

If you are looking for heritage, non-hybrid (open pollinated) seeds for vegetables, herbs, flowers and grains, or if you have seeds to swap, make sure you attend a Seedy Saturday. This year, Seedy Saturday events are planned for three locations: Devonian Botanic Garden on February 5; Stony Plain at the Forget-Me-Not-Greenhouse on February 26; and, at the Northgate Lions Senior Centre in Edmonton on March 25. These events provide an opportunity to buy, swap or sell seeds with other gardeners. Also featured are talks and displays on many topics such as biodiversity, conservation, starting your seeds, native plants, perennials and annuals, and organic and community gardening. For further information, contact the Devonian Botanic Garden (780) 987-2064.

Basics of fertilizer and water management in greenhouse crops

A one-day seminar on the basics of fertilizer and water management in greenhouse crops is planned for February 16, 2000, at Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN), Edmonton. This workshop is designed especially for growers who are afraid of mathematical calculations. The basics of water and watering, fertilizing of greenhouse crops, including vegetables and ornamentals, will be covered. The seminar is sponsored by Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association and costs $40 per person. The CDCN is located at 17507 Fort Road in Edmonton. For further information, contact Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, (780) 415-2303.

Don't let winter rob your bones

Vitamin D is critical for healthy bones. Most vitamin D is made when skin is exposed to sunshine, and that's sometimes hard to come by in the winter. Studies have shown that between October and April, many Canadians don't get enough sunshine to make the required vitamin D. There are few natural sources of vitamin D, but one exception is milk. Milk is the most common food source of vitamin D in Canada. Health Canada recommends preschoolers have two cups of vitamin D fortified milk each day. Adults, growing children and teens need two to four servings of milk every day, as recommended by Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. For the latest version of the Food Guide, visit the Health Canada website at <**http://www.sk.sympatico.ca/Contents/Health/HEALTHYWAY/foodguide.html**>.

Western Canadian Dairy Seminar

Beyond 2000 – Preparing for the Challenges and Opportunities is the theme for the 2000 Western Canadian Dairy Seminar. The seminar will be held in Red Deer at the Capri Trade Centre on March 7 to 10, 2000. The pre-conference tour and workshop are offered on March 7. The tour will visit three local dairy farms that focus on progressive, innovative dairy management. The *Nutrition for Nutritionists* workshop is geared to professional nutritionists, but is open to anyone interested in the application of the CPM Dairy Model. This is a hands-on workshop and bringing a laptop computer is required. The seminar agenda consists of presentations on a variety of timely topics by several prominent North American experts, including two keynote addresses by: Larry Satter, University of Wisconsin and USDA speaking on *Balancing the Animal's Nutritional Needs with Environmental Stewardship*; and, Mike Brouk, Kansas State University, speaking on *Contract Growing Dairy Heifers: the Good, the Bad, the Ugly*. Also presenting are: Dave Reid, Rocky Ridge Veterinary Service, presenting *Improving Milking Efficiency and Udder Health*; Bill Chalupa, University of Pennsylvania, discussing *Balancing Rations of Milk Components*; Rick Corbett, University of Alberta and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, discussing *Processing Barley Grain and High Moisture Barley – How Much is Enough?*; and, Nelson Coyle, Canadian Dairy Commission speaking on *Future Dairy Policy: A Policymaker's Perspective*. For further information or to register, contact Joanne Morrison at (780) 492-3236, fax (780) 492-9130 or e-mail <**wnc@afns.ualberta.ca**>.

Alternative livestock and special crops workshop

The County of Wetaskiwin Ag Service Board and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are hosting a one-day ***Alternative Livestock and Special Crops*** workshop in Wetaskiwin on February 1, 2000. The workshop objective is to assist producers looking to diversify their farm operations with alternative livestock and/or special crops. The information provided will help attendees assess the challenges, realize the risks and investigate the opportunities in the bison, aquaculture, medicinal herb and Timothy hay industries. The keynote address *Understanding Specialized Markets* is given by Dr. Bob Church. Church is a well-known southern Alberta educator, medical scientist, cattleman and entrepreneur. Local producers, Maurice Moore will discuss the **bison industry** and Randy Holmlund will discuss **timothy hay for export**. Kirsty Piquette, pulse and special crops specialist will discuss **medicinal herbs**. A panel of fish farmers, John Bjornson, Dave White and Doug Smith, will share their experiences of the **aquaculture industry**. General speakers include Betty Vladicka on *The Basics of Organic Certification,* Graham Gilchrist on *Understanding and Negotiating Contracts,* and George Rock on assessing the *Profitability* of adding another venture to the farm. The workshop will provide participants an opportunity to view displays and network with representatives and specialists from industry and government. For more information on this workshop please call Jodi Johnson at the Alberta Agriculture office in Wetaskiwin (780) 361-1240 or Steve Majek, director of Ag Services for County of Wetaskiwin (780) 361-6226.

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January 31, 2000

Bill Collins receives the first Distinguished Service Award at the annual Horse Breeders and Owners Conference

At the 2000 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference, held in Red Deer on January 7 to 9, Collins was not only a conference presenter, but received the very first Distinguished Service Award, a presentation that will now be made annually at the conference to honor great Alberta horse people.

Bill Collins has been working with horses and horse people for over 50 years. He is a man of exceptional talent and commitment. He is known and respected world-wide for his ability and expertise when competing in both Western and English equine disciplines. He is an excellent horse trainer and has written articles, lectured and had videos produced to demonstrate his effective techniques.

"We are thrilled to have the chance to acknowledge Bill's contribution to horses and to the horse industry in Alberta," says Les Burwash, manager of horse programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie. "Bill has many awards already to his credit, such as being four times the Canadian National Calf-roping Champion and winning the Canadian Cutting Horse Championship 12 times, and we are glad to add the Distinguished Service Award to that number. He is an amazing man, a good friend and above all, a great horseman."

Doug Milligan, head of the pork, poultry and horse branch with Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton, made the presentation saying:

"The pure essence of one's contributions and achievements can usually be found in the words used to describe him. Occasionally, however, the sheer magnitude of a person's accomplishments and character outdistances even the most noble of words. Such is the case in trying to capture the full impact of Mr. Bill Collins – our omniscient master horseman

"Mentor, teacher, judge, role model, industry icon, many times a national champion in a multitude of disciplines, idol, royal performer, inventor, legendary equine artisan – these words only partially capture his achievements in the equine world.

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"It is with great pride that the Horse Industry Association of Alberta honors Mr. Bill Collins as the inaugural recipient of its Distinguished Service Award – in recognition of the magnitude and magnificence of his contributions to the equine industry in Alberta."

Bill Collins, recipient of the first Horse Industry Association of Alberta Distinguished Service Award

"Collins is a great ambassador for the horse industry," says Milligan. "He has worked hard and has gained credibility and respect for horsemen in and outside of the industry."

Copies of the Award and Commemorative Scroll will be on display at the Western Heritage Centre in Cochrane as an ongoing tribute to Award recipients.

The Horse Breeders and Owners Conference is an annual event held in Alberta in January that has built it's success by always featuring an internationally respected panel of speakers and presenters. The Distinguished Service Award is a fitting and prestigious addition to this excellent conference. Next year's conference is scheduled for January 12 to 14, 2001.

Contact: Les Burwash *Doug Milligan*
(403) 948-8538 *(780) 427-4589*

Pulse Crops in Alberta

Pulse Crops in Alberta is a new book covering pulse crop production and marketing for all the pulse crops grown or researched in the province.

"This publication is packed full of information that will be useful and beneficial for existing and potential growers," says Ken Lopetinsky, pulse crops agronomist, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Barrhead. "The full-color layout has six main sections covering general pulse production; the four main pulse crops – field pea, dry bean, lentil and fababean; and, a section on other pulse crops.

"Over 20 professionals from Alberta Agriculture, along with invited writers, contributed to this complete review of pulse crops. The 150-page publication is set out in point form for easy reading and includes many charts, tables and photographs for better descriptions and examples."

The general pulse production section gives an overview of world production and distribution as well as the importance of pulse crops in Canada and Alberta. Benefits of pulse crops in crop rotations is discussed. Other topics in this section include: inoculation, nutrient removal by pulse crops, practical disease control and harvesting and conditioning of pulse crops.

The four main pulse crops sections include data on variety performance to cost of production tables and marketing information. The agronomics of producing each pulse crop are also fully discussed. Production tips and information on field scouting and diagnosis in the field are provided as reference points to producers. Diseases, weed control and insect problems are discussed and helpful photographs of disease symptoms are included. The information provided covers variables and considerations of these pulse crops from the seed to post harvest.

The final section dealing with other pulse crops includes short descriptions of chickpea, fenugreek, lathyrus, lupin and soybean. Descriptions of the plant, growing conditions and production potential is included for each new pulse crop.

This new publication, ***Pulse Crops in Alberta*** is priced at $25 (plus GST). It is now available for purchase at Alberta Agriculture district offices or from the Alberta Agriculture's Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Payment can be made by cheque (payable to the Provincial Treasurer), money order or by VISA or MasterCard.

To order by phone, call the Canadian toll free line at 1-800-292-5697, or 427-0391 in Edmonton. For mail orders, please add $2 (plus GST) for shipping and handling.

Contact: Ken Lopetinsky
(780) 674-8213

Weed Resistance Education and Action Plan

Herbicide resistant weeds are in the spot light this winter as a new initiative seeks to raise the awareness of producers to resistant weeds. The Weed Resistance Education and Action Program (WREAP) is a joint provincial government, federal government, industry initiative that is suggesting taking one small step towards delaying the selection for resistant weeds.

"Resistant weeds are increasing in the province because of the repeated use of the same herbicide groups," says Linda Hall, research scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural

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Development, Edmonton. "By using the same type of herbicide, susceptible weeds are removed and rare resistant weeds are allowed to produce seed. The result is a slow change in weed populations to one that is uncontrolled by some herbicides."

In the province, seven weeds have been selected for herbicide resistance: wild oat, green foxtail (or wild millet), cleavers, kochia, Russian thistle, spiny annual sow-thistle and chickweed.

"Some herbicides are more prone to selecting for herbicide resistant weeds than others," adds Hall. "Producers are cautioned to be most careful with the Group 1 and Group 2 products. These effective and popular herbicides have a track record. Other products are much less prone to select for resistance, including Roundup and other products containing glyphosate and Group 4 herbicides, like 2,4-D, MCPA, Attain and Lontrel."

There are some management practices that are effective in delaying resistance. Rotate crops and herbicides by group and use herbicide mixtures. Use herbicides at varying times during the year. Practice integrated weed management. Use clean seed of competitive varieties. Increase seeding rates to increase competition with weeds and use appropriate fertilization. Placing the fertilizer with the crop can give the crop the jump on weeds.

"Probably the most important management practice producers can exercise is to scout their fields to find resistant weeds early," says Hall. "Resistant weeds will be apparent two to three weeks after herbicide application. They are usually irregular shaped patches. They are uncontrolled while weeds around them are controlled. If you see resistant weed patches, stop them before they go to seed. If you have suspect seed, Alberta Agriculture can test for herbicide resistance."

For more information or if you suspect a problem, see your local Alberta Agriculture crop specialist.

Contact: Linda Hall
(780) 422-1071

Foundations of costing products

Costing products is often an area that processors feel least comfortable in. Setting a fair, profitable price on products can make the difference in business success or failure.

"***Production Costing***, a new course designed especially for new agri-food processors, is the level one workshop in the *Price It Right* market development program. It provides emerging or existing agri-food processors with an opportunity to review fundamental issues in product development and identify critical costs of production that effect the selling price," says Karen Goad, agrifood development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Grande Prairie. "The workshop emphasizes the product formulation and development process, basic costing and pricing principles, the importance of a solid business and marketing plan, and provides a basic understanding of wholesale/retail distribution systems. Participants receive a detailed manual and related materials."

Workshop facilitators share real-life examples and encourage sharing of experiences among participants. Companies working on product development projects will find this workshop both practical and informative.

Interested businesses can choose either of the following dates

February 11, 2000

Large Conference Room #1903
Provincial Building
10320 99 Street
Grande Prairie, AB

Saturday, February 12, 2000

Peace Community Skills Centre
1105 103 Avenue
Dawson Creek, BC

Registration deadline for this workshop is February 4, 2000. Registration cost is $37.45 (includes GST) per person. Payment is required prior to registration deadline. Please make cheques payable to the Alberta Provincial Treasurer.

Registrations can be forwarded to:

Karen Goad
Agri-Food Development Specialist
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
1001, 10320 - 99 Street
Grande Prairie, AB
T8V 6J4

Phone (780) 538-5285; or fax (780) 538-5288.

Contact: Karen Goad
(780) 538-5285

Alberta Sheep Improvement Alliance formed

The formation of the Alberta Sheep Improvement Alliance has been announced by members of the Western Suffolk Sire Reference Association and the Charolais Sheep Breeders' Society. These organizations are working together to ensure that Alberta sheep breeders enjoy the same access to essential reproductive and genetic improvement services as breeders in other parts of Canada and abroad.

"The Alliance will help Alberta breeders remain competitive in the global market for sheep genetics," says Dr. Cathy Gallivan, Olds-area sheep geneticist involved in the Alliance. "Access to

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reproductive and genetic improvement services will be achieved by working with veterinarians and other service providers, as well as breed groups or individual breeders, to ensure the availability of equipment and expertise for semen collection, artificial insemination, embryo transfer, ultrasound and data analysis."

The alliance has obtained funding from the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund (CARDF) in the amount of $40,301. This amount will be applied against total program costs of $125,963, with the remainder of the costs being covered by the members of the Alliance.

Funding was secured for activities in three main areas: reproductive technology, genetic improvement programs and ultrasound services. Specific activities being supported include training of Alberta veterinarians in collection and freezing of semen and embryos, artificial insemination and embryo transfer, on-farm data collection and analysis, and a training and standards session open to all Canadian ultrasound operators.

"Most of the benefits of this program are open to all purebred sheep producers and, through them, to their commercial customers," adds Gallivan. "Assistance received from the Alberta Sheep Improvement Alliance has allowed the OC Flock Semen Collection Station in Bowden, Alberta to offer a 25 per cent discount on many of their services until the end of the year 2000. The value of this discount to Alberta sheep breeders has already totalled $2,538. Artificial insemination schools and ultrasound training sessions will be open to any sheep breeder or ultrasound operator who wishes to attend."

Other benefits, such as support for on-farm data collection and analysis are available only to members of the Alberta Sheep Improvement Alliance. However, membership in the Alliance is open to any breeder or group of breeders who share the objectives of the Alliance and its commitment to genetic improvement of Canadian sheep.

To demonstrate this commitment, potential members of the Alberta Sheep Improvement Alliance should:

- have purchased breeding stock, semen or embryos based on between-flock estimates of genetic merit
- be willing to invest in genetic improvement and reproductive technology to improve performance
- be using a performance recording system as available for their breed
- be prepared to advance to use of Expected Progeny Differences in their flock
- be prepared to use health testing procedures (e.g., Alberta Assured Quality Flock Health Program) to obtain eligibility for export.
- be prepared to cooperate in research to improve selection or reproductive technology methods.

For more information on the Alberta Sheep Improvement Alliance, contact Dr. Cathy Gallivan at 403-224-3962 (gallivan@telusplanet.net) or Ian Clark at 403-748-2624 (iandebc@telusplanet.net).

Contact: Dr. Cathy Gallivan
(403) 224-3962

Agri-News Briefs

Canola meeting

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is organizing two canola meetings for February, 2000. The program will cover many of the topics canola farmers are most concerned about, including transgenic canola production from both a production and a marketing point of view. Producers are invited to attend and find out the latest developments and how the canola farmer could be affected. Production practices involving insects, disease management, rotations and fertility will also be discussed. Registration cost is $10 per person. The one-day program is scheduled in **Morinville on February 9**. For more information or to register for the Morinville session, contact John Hladky, crop specialist cereals and oilseeds, at (780) 939-4351. The program will be held in **Wetaskiwin on February 10**. For more information or to register for the Wetaskiwin session, contact Ron Hockridge, crop specialist cereals and oilseeds, at (780) 361-1240. Alberta Government numbers are toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000 first.

Brand Book no longer available through Alberta Agriculture

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Publications Office will no longer sell the Alberta Brand Book. As of February 1, 2000, Livestock Identification Services Ltd will be the point of contact for Alberta Brand Books. The Brand Inspection function was privatized in 1998 and transferring responsibility for the Brand Book is the final phase in the process. Alberta Brand Books will now be available from:

Livestock Identification Services Ltd.
Attention: Zena Kalenith
Box 1240
Stettler, Alberta T0C 2L0
Phone (403) 740-4100
Emerald Awards nominations

The Emerald Awards, sponsored by the Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Committee (ESAC), recognize environmental excellence within a number of categories including individual, community, not for profit groups, and business. This is an opportunity to profile some of the agriculture industry's efforts to achieve environmentally sustainable agriculture. The deadline for applications to the Alberta Emerald Foundation for Environmental Excellence is February 29, 2000. For more information on the Emerald Awards, visit the internet site at < **http://www.emeraldawards.com/**>, or contact Carol Bettac, Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) program manager with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton at (780) 427-3885.

Online machinery cost calculator

The Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's agribusiness management branch and internet site team have teamed up to develop an online machinery cost calculator that allows producers to enter purchase price and operating information for farm machines and then calculates the ownership and operating costs of the machine. These costs are given on an annual, per hour and per acre basis. The actual calculations use the same formulas as the ones explained in Alberta Agriculture's ***Farm Operations Cost Guide***. This program draws information from the database that Alberta Agriculture uses to produce the *Farm Machinery Costs* section of the guide, allowing users to estimate costs if they do not have access to their own. The program is user friendly and requires only basic computer skills to use. The continuing trends of tightening margins and increasing machinery prices makes it more important than ever for producers to understand their machinery costs, and this calculator is a fast, easy way to do the calculating. The cost calculator is available on Alberta Agriculture's internet site in the economics/farm management section at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/machcost**>.

DBG education program

The Devonian Botanic Garden has completed their winter/spring/summer 2000 course program. Among the many interesting adult programs, lectures and workshops are:

Tissue Culturing – learn the theory of tissue culturing and the workings of a commercial tissue culture lab. Slides and samples of the process are presented. Some hands-on demonstrations are provided. This course is offered on February 12, 2000 and costs $38 per person

Herb Gardening – herbs suitable and even herbs not quite so suitable for a herb garden in Alberta are discussed. Growing herbs under lights will also be discussed. Herb garden design for northern climates and some hands-on fun make this one-day course a pleasure. It is offered on February 13 and costs $43 per person

Residential Landscape Design – Urban and Suburban – is an introductory course to planning, design, construction and maintenance principles for residential landscaping. The course is a combination of lecture and design exercises and participants will design a landscape plan for their own home. This evening course runs over four weeks, on February 10, 17, 24 and March 2. Cost is $69 per person

Starting a Nursery Business – discussion centres around tree culture, hardiness and availability of stock, planting and over wintering techniques, when to water and when and how to dig and transplant, profit margins and markets. This course is offered on February 26 and costs $34 per person.

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February 7, 2000

Going Organic: Opportunities for the New Millennium

Going Organic (GO) is the inaugural organic conference in Alberta dedicated to the organic and natural food market. GO conferences are exclusively about organics, organic growing and organic markets. The Going Organic: Opportunities for the New Millennium is being held in Edmonton on March 13 and 14, 2000.

"The main focus for this conference is markets, market access and processing," says Mike Dolinski, organic specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and chair of the Alberta Organic Food Committee, Edmonton. "The organic food industry is growing at astounding rates in Europe, the U.S. and in Canada. Alberta producers and growers take good care of the production end of the equation. It's time to concentrate on the marketing and processing area of production to ensure that Alberta's organic producers have the opportunity to capture a significant share of this explosive market."

The conference opens on the evening of March 13 with feature guest speaker, Bill Wadsworth, Iceland Frozen Foods, U.K. He will be discussing What's Driving the Organic Industry in Europe. Iceland Frozen Foods has made a commitment to organic food and continues to expand the organic section of their production at a considerable rate.

Day two is organized into six sessions. Session one deals with market trends. Angus McAllister, Environics International Ltd, Toronto, ON, and Bob Burden, Serecon Management Consulting Inc., Edmonton, will be presenting data on consumer attitudes.

"The second session on day two is all about the global perspective," adds Dolinski. "Bill Wadsworth; Mitsuhiko Kushida, Japan External Trade Organization, Guelph, ON; and Aaron Stephens, Nature's Path Foods Inc., Vancouver, B.C., will make presentations on the international market, United Kingdom, Europe and Japan in particular."

The other sessions deal with accessing the market, from the high-end restaurant industry to local grocery markets; the challenges and opportunities in the North American organic food industry; and, regulatory issues, including Canadian standards set out by the Canadian Organic Advisory Board. Representatives from several companies will outline their view

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of the opportunities that exist in organics, why their companies are looking into organics or why they are already producing organically. They will also give their opinion about the industry as a whole and it's growth potential.

"The conference ends with a session on economic viability," says Dolinski. "Dr. Martin Entz, professor at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, will be presenting information on the sustainability of organic production. Entz will discuss organic production and management systems in western Canada, talking particularly about soil nutrients in organic systems and rotations necessary for long term viability."

For more information about the conference, contact Ken McCormack, project manager with Alberta Economic Development, (780) 427-4241, fax (780) 422-9746 or e-mail <**ken.mccormack@agric.gov.ab.ca**>.

Registration fee is $125 (plus GST) per person. Early registration is recommended as space is limited. To register, contact Iris Meck, AdFarm, (403) 215-3225,
fax (403) 215-3299 or
e-mail <**imeck@adfarmonline.com**>.

A trade show will be held in conjunction with the conference. For information on trade show participation, contact Iris Meck, conference coordinator at (403) 215-3225.

To view the agenda and registration forms, visit the GO internet site at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/marketnews/organics-seminar.html**>.

GO conference sponsors are Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Growing Alberta, Prairie Sun Grains, Food and Beverage Canada, AVAC Ltd., Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and Alberta Economic Development.

Contact:	*Mike Dolinski*	*Ken McCormack*
	(780) 422-4873	*(780) 427-4241*

Winter cereals – the next Cinderella crop of the prairies?

Growers in northeast Alberta are giving a 'thumbs-up' to direct seeded winter cereals like the new varieties of winter wheat. They have some very encouraging things to say about the varieties coming on stream.

"My son and I are really interested in winter wheat. As a wheat crop it's favorable over spring wheat because of the early harvest, strong demand and decent price. It's something I can market myself. It looks like we'll be growing more of it," says Henry Lychak, first time grower from Derwent.

"I feel the winter wheat advantage comes with spreading out the harvest workload while providing consistently higher yields than HRS or my CPS wheat," says Mel Erikson, who grows winter wheat in the Irma area.

"I direct seeded 200 acres of Osprey winter wheat. It's an easy crop to grow and market. As a first-time try, everything went well. I enjoyed the harvest and am pleased with my 60 bushel per acre," says Rick Dobush, Vegreville.

Statistics confirm that winter wheat performs well on the prairies and has a place in the market:

Average Winter Wheat and Spring Wheat Yields (Bu/ac) in 1999

	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	Prairies
Winter Wheat (CWRW)	59.4	41.2	51.0	50.2
Spring Wheat (CWRS)	36.4	35.4	42.2	37.7

Source: Statistics Canada December 1, 1999 report

#1 CWRW	CWB initial @ ÿ 11.5% protein = $2.26/bu (100% call by Aug 99)
#1 CWRS	CWB initial @ ÿ12% protein = $2.51/bu (40% call to date)
#1CPS	CWB initial (% protein NA) = $2.15/bu (A&B contracts 100% call to date)

Source: Cargill AgHorizons, Viking (Jan 21, 2000)

"I invite growers interested in finding out how to introduce a winter cereal into their rotation to contact me," says Ron Heller, with Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), Vermillion.

Direct seeding has a definite impact on the success of these crops in rotation. Efficient use of soil moisture and improved winter survival in standing stubble are two of the big factors.

"The inherent benefits of less tillage for soil conservation, wildlife conservation and farm profit margins are considerably enhanced with the introduction of a fall-seeded crop like winter wheat, winter triticale or fall rye," continues Heller. "A competitive jump on weeds in the spring, avoiding common disease cycles, and an early harvest are more advantages a grower can get from winter wheat in a crop rotation. It's not uncommon to save the cost of wild oats control that is normally required in spring wheat. It may seem *magical*, but seeing is believing, and doing has been convincing for many producers."

The ARTI recognizes the importance of this winter cereal connection as another tool that can be used to reduce the amount and intensity of tillage for annual crops.

"Plans for seeding must begin now. Producers looking for an opportunity to grow winter cereals should contact me or their local crop specialist soon," says Heller. "No-till winter cereals are here to stay, unlike Cinderella's carriage at midnight!"

Contact: *Ron Heller, RTA*
(780) 853-8262
E-mail: ron.heller@agric.gov.ab.ca

Peace region producer group to receive over $70,000 for initiatives

Members of the Peace Value Added Food and Ag. Association (PVAFAA) extended an invitation to Peace Region rural and urban residents to attend the Association's first general meeting. It was a fitting venue to receive notice that both the B.C. Investment Agriculture Foundation and the Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta funding requests had been approved.

"The funds will be used for Association start up costs and promotion of Peace Country products," says Karen Goad, agrifood specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Grande Prairie. "The Association will also use some of the funding to update their website, **<www.pris.bc.ca/psp>**, and for other initiatives identified in the Associations' Business Plan. A number of PVAFAA members have been working diligently for two years on initiatives that will enable Peace Region Producers to add value to their local raw products and to market those products."

The general meeting was held in the Agri-Plex in Rycroft on January 29, 2000. From now on, the PVAFAA will hold general meetings annually.

"Many producers throughout the BC and Alberta Peace have identified a lack of infrastructure as one of the main blocks to further processing of locally grown raw products," says Fred Burton, president of the Association. "Most producers here in the north just don't have deep enough pockets to set up processing facilities. In some of the larger centres there is access to infrastructure, but we don't have that here. Over the years many producers who would be processors have given up, or left the area to add value to their raw products.

"No one entrepreneur can grow, process and market products, have a family, contribute to their community and stay sane. That's why a cooperative approach makes sense."

The Kiwanis Enterprise Centre in Dawson Creek, BC published the report, ***Strategies for Agri-Food Processing in the Peace Country***, in March 1999. The report states that, 'the restrictive avenue of shipping commodities (grains, forages & livestock) out of our region for processing…is the equivalent to sending resources, dollars, jobs and opportunities elsewhere.'

Directors of the PVAFAA have received support from local government specialists. As well as Goad, Harvey Glasier of the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Ian Pickering with PFRA and others have worked with the PVAFAA directors.

The next focus for the association is to complete the business plan for the Agri-Food Community Kitchen/Processing Centre. PVAFAA Coordinator, Donna Tookey says, "We are really happy with the positive response that we have received from the region so far. But there are still a lot of details to be worked out."

The Community Processing Unit is a collaborative effort between the PVAFAA and the Kiwanis Enterprise Centre. The planning committee includes representatives from Dawson FoodShare, Advantage Workers Co-op, Creek Restoration Project and the Peace River Organic Producers Association.

The PVAFAA directors envision that the proposed community kitchen/processing facility will be an incubator for Peace Region entrepreneurs. Anita Schreyer's herb processing unit north of Sexsmith and the proposed Community Kitchen will be the first of hopefully other satellite community processing units throughout the BC and Alberta Peace. Directors will continue to develop strategies that will help entrepreneurs in processing and marketing and also participate in the development of a regional food system.

Contact: Karen Goad
(780) 538-5629

Keeping farm family expenditure records

"Early in the new year is a good time to take a look at family expenditures, says Jean Wilson, business development specialist with the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Agriculture Business Management Branch, Edmonton. "New year's resolutions, an influx of bills from Christmas spending and looming tax deadlines add to the importance. For many farm families, a tight cash situation may make an examination of family spending habits a necessity."

Almost 10 years ago, 173 Alberta farm families kept detailed family expenditure records for the year under a project called Famex. Over half the families were surprised at where their money went. By keeping records, 67 per cent of the families felt they were in better control of their family finances.

Keeping track of personal spending is easier today. Software packages such as ***Quicken*** and ***Money*** let users download their bank and credit card statements. Lots of the detail and calculations can be left to the computer so it's just the cash transactions that have to be accounted for on a daily basis. Bank or Credit Unions can provide more details.

"Ten years ago we compared farm family spending from the Famex research project with Statistics Canada household expenditure survey information," says Wilson. "The findings showed that farm families experienced some savings where they cost shared business expenses such as shelter and transportation."

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The following information is based on 1997 household expenditure surveys conducted by Statistics Canada. Though farm families have not been singled out, we can compare Alberta rural household spending which includes farm families, with Alberta urban household spending.

Average Household Expenditures in Rural and Urban Alberta (1997)

	Rural	Calgary	Edmonton
Household Characteristics			
Number of households in sample	328	558	674
Estimated number of households	151,400	305,040	330,400
Average household size	2.67	2.67	2.7
Expenditure Details			
Food	5,462	6,183	5,721
Shelter	7,260	10,690	10,151
Household Operation	2,411	2,690	2,583
Household furnishing and equipment	1,432	1,623	1,628
Clothing	1,951	2,750	2,546
Transportation	7,498	7,618	7,055
Health Care	1,794	1,812	1,672
Personal Care	523	748	752
Recreation	3,101	3,785	3,438
Reading Materials/other printed matter	253	323	335
Education	456	912	845
Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages	1,220	1,457	1,409
Games of chance	178	225	286
Miscellaneous	735	1,115	826
Total Current Consumption	**34,273**	**41,932**	**39,247**
Personal income tax	9,025	12,144	10,994
Personal insurance payments/pension	2,760	2,893	3,666
Gifts of money and contributions to persons outside the home	1,368	2,111	1,222
Total Expenditure	**47,426**	**59,080**	**55,128**

"If you participated in either the 1986 or 1991 Famex study, I'd really like to hear from you," adds Wilson. "Feedback on what impact keeping family expenditure records have on your family or farm business would be appreciated?"

Call Wilson toll-free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000 and then 415-2146.

Contact: *Jean Wilson*
(780) 415-2146

A tisket – a tasket ... market into a gift basket

Gift basket companies meet the needs of individual consumers and the corporate sector through a variety of gift baskets designed to fit all occasions, tastes and budgets. As an alternative marketing venue, the gift basket industry offers a unique niche opportunity for rural food processors. The gift basket industry is still in its infancy in Canada with most of the companies being home or small business based.

"The gift basket market is seasonal," says Karen Goad, agrifood development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Grande Prairie. "Almost all sales occur four to six weeks prior to Christmas. Much of the product purchasing is done far in advance of the season based on previous sales and industry trends. This means that suppliers have to plan for an early production schedule with later payment. They may have to wait six months for final payment as basket companies place their product orders in August, take delivery in November but are not in a position to pay the producer until the product is sold in late December as part of a gift basket."

The gift basket market is unpredictable and it's not a market for everyone. If the market changes between the time the retailer places the product order and the actual sale, the product may not be required in the quantities ordered. Retailers may have to feature the product and producers may have to supply the order in two lots. It's in the producer's best interest to obtain a delivery contract up front. Flexibility, good communication and commitment to the success of the business are required by both partners.

Sheree Zielke, owner/manager of Applegate's Gift Basket Emporium in Edmonton, one of Alberta's largest gift basket companies, shares what she needs from her producer partners:

Product Quality – gift baskets are upscale items and their components must reflect this image. Products must have quality packaging and labeling which give a high end image. Glass jars give a higher value look to the product. Plastic packaging frequently deteriorates and looks "abused" quickly. If the product has potential in a gift basket but is held back by its label or packaging, many gift basket retailers will advise the producer on alternative packaging. Depending on the type of product, retailers may also negotiate to package the product under their own label.

Small, individually packaged items interest gift basket retailers. Don't spend your money bundling products together. Retailers won't pick them up as they have to pay labor charges to disassemble the bundle before including the individual items in the gift basket.

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'Heft' items have a role to play. Larger, heavier products such as specialty pastas provide the 'heft' factor, or needed weight and volume to the basket. Without the 'heft' products, the smaller, lighter gourmet items would be lost in the basket.

Items should be unique and shelf-stable – Alberta doesn't have a recognized regional product like BC salmon or Quebec maple syrup but gift basket retailers are always looking for new items. If you have one, be sure to provide sufficient product information so the retailer can educate their customers to request the product.

Price Structure is critical – a wholesale price must be offered to the retailer. Retailers will not buy a product if you're selling it to them at the same price you're selling it at the local farmers' market. A maximum $2 wholesale price on any one item is the average. With a full, 100 per cent mark up on gift basket items, item prices add up quickly. A smaller package size may allow more expensive items into the gift basket.

Retailer Service is key – remember, the retailer is your customer. Be aware of his time and business constraints. Make sure the product or service meet his needs and adds to his business' bottom line.

Most gift basket retailers buy in February/March and again in August/September – call the retailer in advance to set up an appointment. Put together a short, professional presentation package on one page of your business letterhead. Include a picture of the packaged product, product description covering its unique features and benefits, wholesale price, terms, minimum order, minimum lots, and your company information. Leave product samples for the retailer to taste or try and call back in two or three days to confirm a decision.

Be flexible on the minimum order if you're approaching the retailer for the first time or introducing a new product line. You're more likely to get an order if you provide six jars for the retailer to sell rather than a full case.

Provide demo product if the gift basket company has a store front. Although the demos will be at your expense, they will increase sales as customers try the product and want to include it in their gift basket orders. This is a mandatory technique if the product is off season or poorly labelled.

"The easiest way to access the gift basket market is to talk to those in the business," adds Goad. "Check the Yellow Pages under the Gift baskets and parcels section for regional listings. Talk to local corporations to see who they purchase their gift baskets from. Consult the internet for additional resources and industry trends. Take your products to the semi-annual trade shows. These shows provide great opportunities to check out both new market opportunities and your competition!"

Contact: *Karen Goad*
(780) 538-5285

Agri-News Briefs

Alberta Hort Congress

The 1999 Alberta Horticulture Congress and Prairie West Trade Show, held in November at the Mayfield Inn, was attended by 681 participants. The 75 speakers invited by the Landscape and Nursery Trade of Alberta (LANTA), the Alberta Market Gardeners Association (AMGA), the Alberta Greenhouse Growers, the Fruit Growers Society, and the Flower and Herb Growers Association, presented a wide range of topics for professional growers. One of the highlights was the keynote speaker, Tim Ball, the sometimes controversial, weather and environment expert. The two-day trade show was also well attended. The 2000 Alberta Hort Congress will be held again at the Mayfield Inn, Edmonton, on November 7 to 11, 2000.

Grains 2000

The Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA) and the Alberta Rye and Triticale Association (ARTA) are hosting the Grains 2000 Conference, February 18 to 20, 2000 in Calgary. Speakers making presentations include: Ron Hierath, MLA for Cardston-Taber-Warner and Chair of the Standing Policy Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; Lyle Vanclief, Minister of Agriculture Canada; and Gary Mar, Minister of Alberta Environment. Other topics being covered include: WTO state of negotiations after Seattle; CPR's vision of the future evolving grain transportation; CNR's vision of grain logistics; genetically engineered crops, identity preservation and segregation in future logistics management and marketing; and, new realities in agriculture. For more information about the conference, to register and for hotel convention rate details, contact Dianne, WBGA Airdrie office, (403) 948-8530.

Agri-Transitions 2000

The Royal Bank of Canada, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Agriculture Business Management Branch, United Grain Growers, United Farmers of Alberta and Meyers Norris Penny are holding three farm management seminars for farm managers on February 7 and 8, 2000. Dr. David Kohl, professor of Agriculture Finance, Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, will be speaking on financial performance in farm business and on global trends in agriculture. The seminars will be held in:

Edmonton on February 7 at 10:00 a.m. at Horowitz Theatre, Students Union Building, University of Alberta. The fees for the seminar are being paid for by the sponsors and participants are asked to contact (780) 492-4228 for further information on registration.

Grande Prairie on February 7 at 7:00 p.m. at the Regional College Theatre. There is no charge for this seminar, participants are asked to contact (780) 538-6510 for further information on registration.

Olds on February 8 at the Olds College Alumni Centre. The Olds seminar runs for a full day, commencing at 9:00 a.m. In addition to Dr. Kohl, Dean Gallimore will be speaking on issues in farm succession planning. Gallimore has a long association with Alberta Agriculture's Agriculture Tax Update for Professionals and is recognized as one of the best agriculture tax specialists in Canada. Registration for the Olds seminar is $50. To register by phone, call (403) 556-8344, 1-800-661-6537 or
e-mail <**ejohnson@admin.oldscollege.ab.ca**>.

New resources available from Alberta Agriculture's multi-media library

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's multi-media library system has added three new videos that are bound to generate a lot of interest around the province

- **The Great Globalization Game** is the first new title. This video is designed to help viewers better understand international trade and multilateral negotiations. Produced prior to the opening of talks in Seattle, this 48-minute production is aimed at both agri-food stakeholders and consumers interested in learning more about the subject.
- **361-1 VT -Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS) Video Primer** – is the second new video. It delivers the message, don't fear hazardous products in the workplace; respect them. The tape shows the difference between supplier and workplace labels, how hazardous products can enter your body, what personal safety equipment is appropriate in what circumstance, and more. Find out how to find WHMIS information and how to use it. This 27-minute tape is an ideal tool for use as part of a group WHMIS training session.
- The third new title, **397 VT – Organic Field and Vegetable Crop Production Parts 1 and 2** features a number of Alberta producers describing organic vegetable and grain production. The video is produced by Dr. Michi Okuda, a former Alberta Agriculture regional entomologist. It is ideal for beginning organic farmers and for training courses. It features interview segments with Alberta producers Steven Snider, Joe and Mary Slovak, Dwayne Smith, and others. The 63-minute video provides a good basis for understanding both organic production techniques and the philosophy associated with the organic movement.

These videos are available from all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district office video libraries and from the central multi-media library in Edmonton. For more information on resources available through Alberta Agriculture's video library, contact Ken Blackley, information officer, multi-media branch, Edmonton, (780) 422-3951, fax (780) 427-2861, or
e-mail <**ken.blackley@agric.gov.ab.ca**>.

Nutrition File seminar

What are the nutrition messages for the new millennium? That question is the theme of the Nutrition File seminar being held in Calgary on February 16, 2000 and in Edmonton on February 17, 2000. The seminar will introduce the nutrition trends of the next century, identifying the key reasons consumers choose the foods they do; what Canadians are really eating; where consumers get their nutrition information and advice; how to 'infotain' clients to educate and get a message across; how the media impacts nutrition attitudes and behaviours; and how to identify and use the media to help communicate nutrition messages. This seminar will be of special interest to dietitians, community and occupational health nurses, fitness professionals and other health professionals interested in learning more about current nutrition trends and how to effectively communicate nutrition messages. Registration deadline is February 11, 2000. For more information, contact the Dairy Nutrition Council of Alberta at (780) 453-5902, ext. 325 in Edmonton, toll free at 1-800-252-7530, ext. 325 or by
e-mail at <**thergott@dnca.ab.ca**>.

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H_2O Quality

Water quality is a subject that everyone has an interest in. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's conservation and development branch has recently updated and re-released a series of factsheets titled ***H_2O Quality***.

"In recent years Alberta livestock producers have increased their efforts to ensure that manure and the nutrient residue from manure do not harm the water in and around their operation," says Sandra Cooke, water quality specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton. "In the past five years, extensive research and studies have been initiated and completed to help give producers the information they need to make sound decisions when it comes to manure management on their land."

There are currently seven factsheets in the ***H_2O Quality*** series:

- Managing Nitrogen to Protect Water Quality *(Agdex 576-1)*
- Managing Phosphorus to Protect Water Quality *(Agdex 576-2)*
- Managing Feedlot Runoff to Protect Water Quality *(Agdex 576-3)*
- Managing Cow-Calf Operations to Protect Water Quality *(Agdex 576-4)*
- Protect Groundwater Quality - Minimize the Risks *(Agdex 576-5)*
- Manure Management to Protect Water Quality *(Agdex 576-6)*
- Hog Production and Water Quality: Minimizing the Risks *(Agdex 576-7)*

Each factsheet provides information on the subject, the benefits in using livestock manure and the valuable nutrients it contains and risks involved if not used, stored and applied correctly. On the back page of each factsheets there is a list of points on how you can help protect Alberta's water resources.

Producers can pick up these free factsheets at any Alberta Agriculture district office. They are also available at the Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

"Producers who would like to find out more about managing manure and maintaining Alberta's water quality are encouraged to contact their regional conservation coordinator," adds Cooke.

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Alberta

The ***H_2O Quality*** factsheets are also available on-line at Alberta Agriculture's internet site **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/navigation/sustain/water/index.html>**.

Contact: Sandra Cooke
(780) 427-3397

Alberta's Food Safety Info Line

The Food Safety Info Line (FSIL) enters the new millennium with new coordinator and food safety information officer Jane Carlyle. A professional home economist and private consultant, Carlyle brings over 25 years of food marketing, public relations and consumer education skills to the FSIL.

"Carlyle has worked as a district home economist for Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and spent over 20 years as communications manager for the Alberta Egg Producers Board," says Suzanne Tenold, agri-food specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie. "Carlyle has recently upgraded her food safety knowledge by successfully completing advanced food safety and food microbiology courses from the University of Alberta."

The Food Safety Info Line, a project of the Alberta Home Economics Association, has successfully operated the unique consumer hotline in Alberta since June 1995. During 4 1/2 years of operation, the line has received more than 12,200 calls. The service has become recognized as the information source of choice by consumers, the media, health professionals and related health service organizations.

The hotline is staffed from 9:00 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday. At other times, callers can leave messages on the voice mail. These are replied to the next business day.

For reliable answers to your food safety questions and information concerning food quality practices keep the Food Safety Information Line phone number handy and give the line a call with your questions. The toll free number is: 1-800-892-8333.

Please note, there is a new address and fax number for the FSIL.

Food Safety Info Line
Box 21, Site 1, R.R. #7
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2G7

Calgary (403) 287-0098, Edmonton (780) 490-0647,
Fax (403) 569-1074

Groups and organizations interested in becoming sponsors are welcome. By aligning themselves with the service, sponsors have an opportunity to demonstrate their company's belief in and endorsement of an initiative for the health and well being of Albertans, and be widely represented as a major player in the quality assurance arena. A comprehensive funding model has been developed, and the Food Safety Info Society Board is now well positioned to go forward with an aggressive sponsorship program.

Contact: Suzanne Tenold — Jane Carlyle
(403) 948-8504 — (403) 287-0098

How to store food safely

The Food Safety Info Line (FSIL), a a project of the Alberta Home Economics Association, has produced a new booklet called ***How to Store Food Safely***.

"The Canadian agri-food industry works under strict regulations to ensure delivery of a safe food supply to consumers," says Jane Carlyle, coordinator and food safety information officer with FSIL, Calgary. "Once food is purchased, however, the safe storing and handling of that food is up to the consumer. Safe handling prevents spoilage, contamination and the development of food-borne bacteria that can cause illness."

Not all foods keep the same. Some have a great shelf-life, others need refrigeration to prevent deterioration. Some foods can be frozen and keep very well in the freezer, others should not be frozen or have a shorter freezer life.

How to Store Food Safely includes sections on: bakery items – shelf, fridge and freezer storage; foods purchased frozen – freezer storage and storage in the fridge after thawing; refrigerated foods purchased - fridge and freezer storage; fresh produce, fruits – shelf and fridge storage; fresh produce, vegetables – shelf and fridge storage; shelf stable foods – opened and unopened shelf and fridge storage; home cooked foods – fridge and freezer storage.

"This booklet is a handy, easy-to-use, quick reference," adds Carlyle. "For answers to other safe food storage questions or for other food safety issues, Albertans are encouraged to call the Food Safety Info Line toll free at 1-800-892-8333."

The hotline is staffed from 9:00 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday. At other times, callers can leave messages on the voice mail. These are replied to the next business day.

Copies of the booklet are available by writing:

Food Safety Info Line
Box 21, Site 1, R.R. #7
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2G7

or by calling the FSIL at 1-800-892-8333.

Contact: Jane Carlyle
(403) 287-0098

Cont'd on page 3

Stocking ponds to create recreational fishing opportunities

Creating recreational fishing opportunities on privately owned land is easy and can be very fulfilling and relaxing.

"Rural Albertans who have a water body on their land can apply to become a recreational fish culturist by simply filling out the yearly recreational fish culturist licence application," says Jack Stewart, licencing coordinator with the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's aquaculture section, Lethbridge. "The 2000 licences cost $10 and expire on March 31, 2001, or Albertans can apply for a five-year licence, which costs $50 and expires on March 31, 2005. If the water body in question requires a site inspection, an additional $42.80 is charged."

A recreational fish culture licence allows the holder to keep cultured fish, as specified, in the water body named on the licence. The fish must be for recreational and non-commercial use by the applicant. Fish cannot be sold.

Water body inspection is required to ensure that it is situated on privately owned land. The inspection also must establish that the water body is isolated from other water. This ensures that stocking fish will not adversely affect the environment or native fish.

"A recreational fish culture licence allows the stocking of several types of fish," says Stewart. "These include: Arctic char, Rainbow trout, Brook trout, Brown trout, Tiger trout and triploid grass carp.

"Many Albertans enjoy the sport of recreational fishing. The recreational fish culturist licence is another way to increase the multiple use of water bodies on privately owned land."

Alberta landowners considering applying for a recreational fish culturist licence are encouraged to contact Stewart in Lethbridge at (403) 381-5164.

Alberta Agriculture has published an Agri-Facts factsheet, Fish Culture Licences (Agdex 485/84-1) that covers the different types of fish culture licences, requirements and any restrictions that may apply. This factsheet is available at all Alberta Agriculture district offices and through the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. This factsheet can also be ordered electronically using the order form posted on the Alberta Agriculture internet site **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/form/ordrfree.html>**.

Contact: Jack Stewart
(403) 381-5164

Agri-News Briefs

Forage Insurance

Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) provides comprehensive coverage for Alberta hay crops. Alberta forage producers know how dry it's been the last couple of years, and if 2000 is also a dry year, hay crops could be at risk. AFSC provides four levels of coverage and price options so forage insurance is flexible enough to fit any farm. The deadline for forage insurance through AFSC is February 29, 2000. Be sure to call the local district of AFSC as soon as possible to put forage insurance in place on your farm.

Varieties of perennial hay and pasture crops

A new Agri-Facts factsheet, ***Varieties of Perennial Hay and Pasture Crops for Alberta*** (Agdex 120/32) published in December 1999, is available. The factsheet charts yield comparison data collected and compiled by the Alberta Forage Variety Committee. Data included in the fact sheet requires that there be three harvest years from two locations in each soil climatic area before the data is included. All yields are taken as hay yields. Information in the factsheet may be useful to producers as an indicator of potential yield differences between varieties. The factsheet is available from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices and the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H This factsheet can also be ordered electronically using the order form posted on the Alberta Agriculture internet site **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/form/ordrfree.html>**.

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Malting Barley

Have you ever thought about growing malting barley? Selecting a variety is the first step in the successful production and marketing of malting barley and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has produced a new Agri-Facts factsheet that discusses the quality requirements, how to choose a variety, selecting a field, seeding considerations, fertilizer factors, weed control and disease control, harvesting methods and includes information on preparing a representative sample. For a copy of this free factsheet, ***Malting Barley*** (Agdex 114/20-2) visit an Alberta Agriculture district office or the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. This factsheet can also be ordered electronically using the order form posted on the Alberta Agriculture internet site **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/form/ordrfree.html>**.

Organic Production Workshop

An ***Organic Production Workshop*** is being held in Edmonton, on March 13, 2000, in conjunction with the *GO – Going Organic* conference. The workshop can be considered the 'value-added' portion of the conference. The speakers will focus on sustainable organic production from a science based conventional agriculture background. The speakers include: Doug Penney, agronomist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Dr. Linda Hall, weed specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; and, Doug Keyes, agronomist, Norwest Labs. Topics being covered are: soil structure, soil pH effects, macro and micro nutrient balance, symptoms of deficiencies, economic thresholds, integrated weed management – organic options, how to soil sample, analysis methods, and organic fertility options. For further information or to register, contact Wanda Gruenheidt at (780) 422-4915 (government numbers are toll free by dialling 310-0000 first) or e-mail at **<wanda.gruenheidt@agric.gov.ab.ca>**.

Focus on Food

The 4th annual Regional Nutrition and Food Services conference, ***Focus on Food, Flavour, Fortification, Functional Foods, Food Safety and Franchising Trends***, is being held on March 10, 2000 at Bernard Snell Hall, University of Alberta Hospital, Edmonton. Eight experts will speak about the many aspects of nutrition and food. Information on planning a new food service or considering franchising will be provided. Upcoming food, nutritional and weight loss products, food service systems and educational materials will be showcased. For further information, contact Katherine Rufino-Gee at (780) 407-7406.

The Canadian diet has changed in the last 30 years

Where do veggies, fruits, meats and dairy products stack up in our diets? Surveys done in 1997 show that Canadians are eating, on average, 15 per cent more fruit than they did 30 years ago, and for the most part, the fruit was fresh. Canadians are eating 70 per cent more vegetables; 25 kilos of chicken, that's twice the amount consumed in the 60's; 59 kilos of red meat; 85 kilos of cereal grains, 25 per cent more than three decades ago. Homogenized milk consumption is down to 15 litres a year, on average, skim and 1% milk are up to 24 litres. Approximately 45 litres per year of 2% milk is consumed and it is the most popular milk on the market. The average Canadian ate 179 eggs, down from 260 in the late 60's. Statistics taken from Nutrition Action, Canadian Edition, April 1999.

Raising fish in your pond or dugout

The seminar, Raising Fish in Your Pond or Dugout will be held in Alberta during the next two years. This course is for anyone interested in raising fish for recreational purposes. It will provide an overview of specific requirements to raise fish, including selecting and constructing a fish pond, licencing requirements, purchasing fish and supplies, feeding, water quality, aeration and disease, predator and weed control. In addition to classroom instruction, participants will have the opportunity to view various fish culture and aeration equipment and speak directly with industry representatives. This half-day course is scheduled for 16 locations in Alberta in 2000 and will be offered in several locations in 2001, also. Cost of the course is $25 (including GST). For more information on dates and locations, contact Eric Hutchings, aquaculture biologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Medicine Hat (403) 529-3616. Government numbers are toll free by dialling 310-0000 first.

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Agri-News

February 14, 2000

Premier Klein to carry grain farmers' message to Prime Minister

Premier Ralph Klein has sent a letter to the Prime Minister adding his support to farmers and producer groups, calling on the federal government to take the necessary action to improve Canada's grain handling and transportation systems.

The letter follows a meeting on January 26, 2000 between Premier Klein and a number of Alberta farm groups and organizations, representing approximately 90,000 prairie farmers. The industry presented the Premier with their position on the Estey/Kroeger reports and other recommendations to improve farm income. Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister Ty Lund and Infrastructure Minister Ed Stelmach were also in attendance.

Premier Klein acknowledged that many of the current problems facing agriculture may be beyond the immediate control of Canada and the provinces. "However, Canada needs to restructure those systems that are inefficient and wasteful," Klein stated. "These impediments to more efficient grain handling and transportation are extremely costly to farmers. Implementing the Kroeger package of reforms will save western farmers hundreds of millions of dollars annually."

"These changes are possible within Canada's own back yard. They would promote a more commercial system, improve competition, enhance choice for farmers and thereby increase farmer returns. By not allowing these changes to take place, the federal government only worsens the current difficulties our producers are experiencing," said Lund.

Klein's open letter to the Prime Minister of Canada supports the Estey/Kroeger approach to grain handling and transportation. Kroeger, appointed by the federal government to work out the implementation details of the Estey Report, has made recommendations that will provide for a more commercial contract-based focus to the grain transportation system and allow the marketplace to work more efficiently.

Changes to the heavily-regulated transportation system would position the agriculture industry to better compete in the rapidly expanding global value-added marketplace. Farmers will be able to take advantage of these opportunities and cost efficiencies if the necessary changes are made.

"The global economy will not wait for Canada," Stelmach added. "Reforms to the grain transportation system will benefit the western Canadian economy; particularly our farm economy."

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Klein agreed to discuss this issue on behalf of Alberta producers at the upcoming Premiers' Conference in Quebec City.

A copy of the letter can be viewed by visiting the Government of Alberta's website at **<http://www.gov.ab.ca/acn/200001/8685.html>**.

Contact: *Fay Orr – Communications Director,*
Office of the Premier
(780) 422-4905

Michael Lohner – Office of the Minister,
Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(780) 427-2137

Ron Glen – Office of the Minister, Infrastructure
(780) 427-2080

For toll-free calling outside of Edmonton, dial 310-0000

Alternative agriculture enterprises

"There's lots of interest in alternative agriculture enterprises this year," says Marian Williams, rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Camrose. "In one week, eight calls were received from farm families in the Camrose area who are interested in adding a new enterprise to their farm. Organics, value-added agriculture and horticulture ventures are of interest in this area."

"A new series of factsheets will be a useful resource to help families explore new enterprise opportunities," comments Jean Wilson, business development specialist with Alberta Agriculture's Agriculture Business Management Branch. "The ***Ag-Alternatives*** factsheets are designed to help families evaluate the feasibility of a new agricultural or rural based business. Worksheets in each factsheet will help personalize the information. The first three factsheets in the series are now available."

Where do you want to be? is the key question posed in the first fact sheet called ***Personal and Family Considerations*** (Agdex #1834-10). "Farm families are looking at new opportunities for a variety of reasons; some want to bring in another family member, others want to increase their income, some want a new challenge," adds Wilson. "Most farms are operated as a family business, so it's essential to get family members involved in the decision making process. Even if they aren't directly involved in the business, all family members are affected by it."

It's easy to be influenced by the latest trends or fads when exploring new opportunities. Often the key to a successful new venture is finding a good match between your skills, physical resources, and financial resources and a promising market opportunity. Information in the second factsheet called ***Identifying Alternatives*** (Agdex 811-2) will help farm families explore the possibilities.

"Marketing is one of the most challenging areas for farm families who get involved in a new agriculture venture," says Wilson. "The third factsheet ***Marketing – Will it Sell?*** (Agdex 848-5) addresses the basic research skills needed to evaluate the market for a new enterprise. It includes information on how to conduct market surveys such as questionnaires and personal interviews so that you get some useful information."

Production – Can I do it?; ***Financial Feasibility – Can I Afford to do it?***; ***Profitability – can I make Money***; and, ***Decision-Making – will I do it?*** are the titles of the factsheets that will complete the series and be available in the next few months.

It takes time to plan a new business venture, but success often relates to good planning. When exploring a new agriculture related business, talk to one of the rural development specialists – business.

The *Ag-Alternative* factsheets are available from all Alberta Agriculture district offices and at Alberta Agriculture's publications office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: *Jean Wilson*
(780) 415-2146

Opening your doors to farm accommodations

People open their homes to guests for many reasons. On a farm, it can be to diversify the operation and generate extra income. It can be an innovative way to attract a new customer base to sell existing agricultural products. It can provide a new and exciting angle to running a farm operation, allowing you to meet new people and explore other interests. You could be interested in acting as an ambassador for the agriculture industry, educating and instilling a greater appreciation for the true agriculture lifestyle.

"Whatever the reason people decide to open their farm to guests, whether it's a country vacation, Bed & Breakfast, an Inn or log cabins, it's important to be ready for them," says Sharon Homeniuk, rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Stony Plain. "As an owner, these entrepreneurs require the social graces to carry on interesting conversations, as well as being

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able to handle the physical work of keeping rooms presentable, have some decent culinary skills to continually serve appetizing breakfasts, and the management skills to keep the business running in today's complex tourism environment."

Setting up accommodations is like any other business venture. There's a lot to learn and lot of work involved. In fact, the lifetime of an average bed and breakfast is only five to seven years. This seems to be the point at which many owners suffer burnout. This business is not simply making another bed, serving breakfast and chit chat.

"On February 23, 2000, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is offering a one-day workshop called ***Setting Up Accommodations on the Farm***," adds Homeniuk. "It will be held in the Stony Plain provincial building. The workshop features a number of guest speakers, including experienced accommodations operator, Enid Plumb, of the Inn at the Ranch near Smoky Lake. A local Health Inspector will also be on hand to discuss health regulations that relate to accommodations."

The seminar will cover: setting up housekeeping and guest procedures, the regulations involved in this type of venture, how to plan for food services, and how to keep client records and carry out market research. Albertans considering setting up guest accommodations on their farm, won't want to miss this hands-on, informative workshop.

For more information and to register, contact Homeniuk in the Stony Plain Alberta Agriculture office, at (780) 963-6101 (toll-free access via 310-0000).

Contact: *Sharon Homeniuk*
(780) 963-6101

Seeding equipment; the next step in the move to direct seeding

Residue management is the first step in making the move to direct seeding. Straw and chaff that are not spread widely and evenly over the field will cause seeding equipment problems.

"Once straw and chaff have been managed properly, the next step is to look at seeding equipment issues," says Mark Olson, reduced tillage agronomist with Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative, Leduc. "Surveys and focus groups conducted by government and industry alike, reveal that one of the main reasons farmers give for not having made the switch to direct seeding or reduced tillage is seeding equipment."

There are primarily two concerns – the environmental conditions on your particular farm and the cost of seeding equipment and choosing the right seeding equipment for the soil types.

"Both of these issues are interrelated, since having a costly new piece of seeding equipment that isn't the right one for the farm, is a farmer's worst nightmare," says Olson. "Interestingly, every type of seeding equipment can work – and work well – if the farmer understand the basic concepts around direct seeding and plant growth."

The cost of equipment is a inherent problem to the business of farming no matter whether it is a seeder, tractor, grain truck, or combine. The biggest question is whether this particular piece of equipment will pay for itself. New seeding technology of today is better than that of 20, 10 and even 5 years ago. In fact, Western Canada is the world leader in this area, with our seeding technology being exported to many countries around the world.

"In many of the machinery cost spreadsheets I've seen run over the last few years, the greatest determining factor in the decision to buy, lease or have the work custom done is farm size," adds Olson. "Commonly, these spreadsheets indicate that a minimum of 1200 to 1500 acres is needed to pay off a new airseeder. This cost is dependent on which options are included as well; seeders with Global Positioning System capability for things such as variable rate fertilization and seeding could cost well over $150,000 depending on the type of opener and width of machine. All these costs add up and must be factored into the decision."

Cost savings in diesel fuel through less tillage passes can often make the annual payments on a new air seeder. Alberta Agriculture's ***Farm Operations Costs Guide*** has survey results in which farmers indicate that a single tillage pass costs between $4.50 to $6.00/acre. This may be slightly different for each farm and will vary with tractor size, cultivator size, years payments and interest rates. However, based on these survey results, eliminating two tillage passes on 1200 acres would be a $10,800 to $14,400 savings, and that could cover the payment on the new equipment. Machinery cost calculators can be viewed and used by visiting the Alberta Agriculture's internet site at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/**>.

"For the smaller farmer, increasing the number of acres farmed may or may not be feasible because of land availability in the area or how financially leveraged the farm is already," says Olson. "Neighbors going together to buy large, more costly pieces of equipment is becoming increasingly common but responsibilities have to be clearly defined before hand. Financial institutions will lend money for such arrangements, however, each partner will still be held accountable for the entire amount of the loan rather than simply the share or percentage of ownership of the machine."

Used equipment and modifying equipment is another solution to the high cost of equipment but it's important to do the homework before purchasing.

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"Airseeder technology has improved a lot over the last 10 years," continues Olson. "DK Noble, Versatile 2000, and Edwards HD 812 hoe drills, without a lot of modifications, have been used as direct seed drills by many farmers who are just starting in direct seeding. As for modifying seeding equipment, one of the best kept secrets is taking the John Deere 9350, 9450 or International 7200 hoe drills and adding an Atom jet opener to direct seed."

Contact: *Mark Olson*
(780) 980-4898

Scheduling bedding plant crops

Demand to produce good quality bedding plants in bloom at a given time has increased with supermarket competition. Because variation in quality or timing within a season or from year to year causes consumer disappointment, it is important for bedding plant growers to understand the factors that affect the flowering of many annual bedding plants.

"The first thing growers have to decide on is the selling period," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN), Edmonton. "Experienced growers understand the selling period cycle, although once in a while a late spring or an extended summer can force changes. Some growers rely on published guidelines and tend to making yearly changes and adjustments."

In Alberta, the bedding plant sales period starts around the third week in April and runs until the end of June. The majority of sales are made around the third week of May. Growers who supply plant material to other wholesalers will start their selling period earlier.

When scheduling bedding plant crops, consider:

- **the plant type** – annual, perennial, vegetable plugs, herbs
- **intended use of the plant** – plants for baskets, liners, tubs and containers need to be sown earlier than plants for cell packs or planting out
- **seed type** – raw versus processed and hybrids or other treated seeds need to be sown at various dates. Treated and hybrid seed provide better and more uniform germination in a short period of time when compared to raw or non-treated seed
- **staggered planting** – some species, such as petunias, marigolds and snaps, need to be sown at staggered, multiple dates
- **seeding methods** – open flat, small plug cell pack or 128 transplant all grow differently
- **media** – pH, water holding capacity, cation exchange, porosity, water retention of the growing media type being used must be considered
- **media volume** – the volume of growing media and space available for root ball formation in various types of flats affect the plant growth and has a direct influence on the final product
- **transplanting techniques** – multiple or single, quality versus quantity and the crew handling the plants at various growth stages also affect the product
- **water** – quality, quantity, frequency of watering, temperature, initial pH and total dissolved salts along with leaching fraction and overhead versus flood irrigation can also impact the product
- **fertilizer** – type of nitrogen, amounts supplied versus what is available, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium sulfates, micro nutrients and pH of the solutions can result in the success or failure of a crop.

Contact: *Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza* *Muhammad Younus*
(780) 415-2303 *(780) 415-2317*

Agri-News Briefs

Nutrients in Manure

In addition to steaks, bacon and omelettes, agriculture in Alberta also produces and utilizes manure. Getting the best out of this byproduct is the objective of a number of workshops planned for this winter at five locations in the Peace Region. Some of these workshops will be one day seminars, and other workshops will be two day conservation planning workshops concentrating on manure handling and application on the farmer's own farm with the use of aerial photos, and manure and plant nutrient balances. Topics to be covered at these workshops and seminars include manure quality, soil characteristics, watersheds and dugouts, aerial photos, Code of Practice, AESA, air quality, composting, conservation plans, riparian areas, and possible impact on fisheries. Not all topics will be available at all five locations; for example, the impact on fisheries will only be dealt with at the High Prairie workshop. The five locations will include High Prairie, Worsley, Grande Prairie, Manning, and La Crete. The La Crete workshop was held on November 23. Dates for future workshops include:

High Prairie	February 28 and 29
Worsley	March 1 and 2
Grande Prairie	March 2 and 3
Manning	March 6 and 7

For more information, contact Randy Perkins technologist or John Zylstra, regional conservation coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at (780) 835-2291. Local agriculture fieldman can also be contacted for registration, or for more information.

Range seminar proceedings available

The first Western Range Science Seminar, sponsored by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Lethbridge Research Centre and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, was held January 23 to 25 in Lethbridge. Seminar presentations and proceedings of the sold out event have been made available and anyone unable to attend can order a copy. The seminar was designed to update range managers with the latest practical information and progress in range science. The proceedings include short overviews of each presentation, actual papers from the presentations, and scaled down copies of research posters presented at the conference. The proceedings include sections on the fundamentals of range management, including: Rangelands: Their Functions, Our Needs and Actions; Range Livestock Production; Managing the Water Supply; and, Rangelands: Home to Ranchers and Wildlife. The proceedings are available for $15 per copy. When ordering, please send cheque or money order made payable to Western Range Science Seminar, along with your name, farm or ranch business name, return mailing address, phone, fax and email address to Brenda Chmielewski, public lands division, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, #100, 5401 - 1st Avenue S., Lethbridge, AB T1J 4V6. No phone or e-mail orders, please.

Eliminating E. coli from beef cattle

A University of Alberta scientist is leading a team of researchers to develop a vaccine to eliminate E. coli 0157:H7 from beef cattle herds. Dr. Glen Armstrong, Medical Microbiology and Immunology professor received $202,922 in funding from the Canada Alberta Beef Industry Development Fund (CABIDF) to conduct research that is intended to eliminate contamination of meat by E. coli 0157:H7 before it enters the food chain. E. coli 0157:H7 doesn't cause illness in cattle but can cause quite dramatic symptoms in humans, particularly the young and the elderly. Symptoms include severe diarrhea, and in worst cases, the disease can be fatal. Since it takes only 10 to 100 organisms to cause disease in humans, any trace of E. coli detected in a carcass means the meat must be discarded. This project will focus on developing a vaccine that will prompt the production of antibodies by the animal to prevent the E. coli 0157:H7 from sticking to the gastrointestinal tract of the animal. This is a three-year project that researchers expect will demonstrate a feasible and affordable approach for the beef industry to eliminate E. coli 0157:H7 in beef. The desired outcome is that all producers would use the vaccine, which would result in complete elimination of the organism from Canadian beef herds Increased confidence in the food supply is one of the main incentives behind this research. CABIDF is a $16.4 million fund, comprised of equal contributions of $8.2 million from the federal and provincial governments. The fund is managed for Alberta beef producers by the Alberta Cattle Commission.

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The Tiffin Conference Series

Farm Management Strategies for the Year 2000 is the theme of this year's Tiffin Conference Series. The Tiffin Conference Series is a new initiative to bring world class learning opportunities to farm managers in southern Alberta. It is made possible through the Ronald W. Tiffin Agricultural Endowment, which funds educational ventures supporting agricultural outreach, research and development, as well as international exchanges related to agricultural issues. The conference will be held at the Lethbridge Lodge Hotel on February 28 and 29, 2000. Keynote speaker is Dr. David Kohl, professor of Agricultural Finance, Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Kohl, as well as teaching, lecturing and writing widely acclaimed books and journal articles on the subject, has conducted detailed research on how to prosper in our rapidly changing environment. The practical application of this wealth of knowledge is the main focus of his presentation. Detailed information on the conference and all speakers and the topics being presented can be viewed on the internet at <**www.lethbridgec.ab.ca**>. Conference fee is $165 per person and the student rate is $40 per student (all fees quoted include GST). For more information or a brochure, contact Anne Lewis at (403) 317-3505 or e-mail <**pr@lethbridgec.ab.ca**>. Registration by phone is possible by calling (403) 320-3505 locally or toll free 1-800-572-0103 (ext. 3323); quote Tiffin Conference registration #813404C01.

Agri-News

February 28, 2000

Ag Summit 2000 – a springboard for agriculture sustainability

This year, with agriculture at a crossroads, thinking about spring for me is synonymous with thinking about *Ag Summit 2000*. As Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD), I sincerely hope that by now you are aware that the five month process has been launched to engage Albertans in discussion about the future sustainability of agriculture in this province.

As a government, we know the importance of agriculture to Alberta's economy. It built Alberta and continues to be our largest renewable resource and vital source of economic sustainability and well being. Let's work together to keep it that way.

With this in mind, I am happy to report to Albertans that the Ag Summit process got off to an excellent start in early February at a Leaders' Workshop in Red Deer. The workshop was opened by Premier Ralph Klein and co-chaired by former Canadian Agriculture Minister Charlie Mayer and Alberta Agriculture and Food Council Chair, Brian Heidecker.

The two-day leaders' meeting was an important first step. The 110 leaders, from all aspects of the industry, certainly rose to the occasion in mapping out a plan that will help provide a platform for the next stages of the consultation process. I am grateful for their strategic thinking in beginning to identify major issues, strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities that face the industry.

I urge producers and processors to get involved in this very worthwhile and necessary process. I want to hear from you and look forward to your comments, suggestions and proposals.

If you are unable to attend one of the various meetings being arranged throughout the province in March and April, then please check out Ag Summit's website at <**www.agsummit.gov.ab.ca**> for updates and information on how you can submit your thoughts and ideas.

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Alberta
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The meetings around the province will provide input from the sectors' stakeholders and serve as a basis for future discussions for the topic specific meetings in late April or early May. In turn, material gathered from all meetings and general public input will be the basis for the development of **action plans** which will be discussed at a major meeting scheduled for June 7 and 8.

Obviously, this process will be about leaving no stone unturned. We need to examine all aspects of agriculture during the Ag Summit process in order to find innovative actions to ensure sustainable growth in agri-food industry in this province. This will create a new roadmap in Alberta and a mandate for action. We look forward to your input into this important process.

Ty Lund
Minister,
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

Crop Protection 2000

The information needed to make the best decisions on insecticide, herbicide or other chemical treatment needs for this year's crops is available in ***Crop Protection 2000***. This book is produced each year to keep Alberta farmers up-to-date with information on herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides.

"Commonly known as the *Blue Book*, the 2000 issue is easy to use," says Shaffeek Ali, acting leader, pest prevention and management unit with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's pest prevention and regulatory unit. "It's the most up-to-date guide of its kind and includes new pesticide registrations, formulation changes, minor use registrations and a complete guide to safety, including protective clothing and first aid."

Details on the latest registered mixes and mix restrictions, application tips, expected results, storage and first aid precautions are included in the guide along with a listing of the weeds, diseases or pests controlled by each chemical.

Some of the features in ***Crop Protection 2000*** are:

- an updated listing of pesticide container disposal sites with contact names and telephone numbers
- chemical group numbers on the same page as the chemical providing quick reference for herbicide resistance management
- a chart on Group Classification by Modes of Action
- new pesticide registrations, new herbicide tank mixes and the new crop varieties for the new registrations

"The guide includes information on new chemicals, the latest registered mixes, on sprayer tank clean-out, application tips, expected results, storage and first aid precautions," adds Ali. "Even though the guide gets bigger each year, we have been able to keep the cost down. It's still only $10, plus GST, a great value that helps farmers protect their investments by helping them choose the right way to treat their crops."

This publication is available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices or the Publications Office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. VISA and MasterCard orders can be placed by calling 1-800-292-5697. The shipping and handling cost per order is $2, plus GST.

"Identification, advance planning and proper use are important concepts in protecting crops," says Ali. "Arming yourself with up-to-date information is cost-effective and makes good sense."

Contact: *Shaffeek Ali*
(403)422-4909

Insect pest forecast, 2000

Crop losses from insect pest attack have been severe in Alberta in recent years, particularly for canola growers. Advance warning and crop scouting can be instrumental for enabling producers to respond quickly in the event of an outbreak. For 2000, the insects likely to cause crop damage are Lygus bugs, grasshoppers, cabbage seedpod weevils and flea beetles.

"Growers should monitor their fields carefully for Lygus bugs," says Lloyd Dosdall, research entomologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "In 1998, 1.4 million acres of canola were sprayed to control Lygus infestations in Alberta, and although this value declined to 350 thousand acres in 1999, the possibility of renewed Lygus attack remains strong. The insects went into winter with good fat reserves because the long, mild fall extended their feeding period, and adequate snow cover in most parts of the province is protecting the wintering adults."

Lygus feed on actively growing points on plants, sucking plant juices from stems and buds. They are most damaging, however, when plants set pod. At this stage, the insects pierce ripening pods and suck out nutrients from developing seeds.

"Canola growers should begin monitoring their canola crops for Lygus in the bud and bolting stages, because this is the time when plants are most attractive to egg-laying adults," suggests Dosdall. "Populations at bud are a good general indicator of infestation levels later in the season. Farmers should continue to monitor crops, at least weekly, right through flowering and into the pod stages."

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The best monitoring tool is a standard sweep net. The economic threshold for Lygus is 1.5 lygus/sweep based on 10 sets of 10 sweeps/set. In other words, if there are more than 15 Lygus bugs found in 10 sweeps consistently, growers should consider applying insecticide for Lygus control at the end of bloom.

Growers should try to avoid spraying crops early in the season because good rainfall while the crop is flowering can help plants compensate for Lygus bug damage. During the 1998 outbreak, however, some growers found that Lygus numbers were so high they prevented crops from ever coming into full flower. When such high Lygus numbers are present, it will be necessary to spray early.

"Grasshopper infestations are a real concern for 2000, especially because populations have been gradually building for the past few years," adds Dosdall. "The long, dry fall in 1999 promoted heavy egg-laying by females. If our relatively thin snow cover this winter is followed by warm, dry conditions in spring, it will almost certainly spell serious trouble with grasshoppers. To date, our surveys show that egg populations were quite high in the southern Peace River region, near Barrhead and Sangudo in northwestern Alberta, near Elk Point, Lac La Biche, Bonnyville, and Lloydminster in northeastern Alberta, and near Provost and Wainwright in east central Alberta. In an unusual development, southern Alberta is at relatively low risk from grasshoppers this year because rainfall levels there have been fairly high for the past two years."

In 2000, canola growers in southern Alberta are at grave risk from infestations of cabbage seedpod weevil, a relatively new pest for Alberta. This pest was only discovered here in 1995, probably introduced from the U.S. Already its range has expanded to the Saskatchewan border in the east, the Rocky Mountains in the west and as far north as Olds.

"The cabbage seedpod weevil is a tiny insect, only three to four millimetres in length, but capable of taking a big bite out of canola yields," says Dosdall. "Crop losses from attack by the cabbage seedpod weevil can occur in several ways. Females lay their eggs into seedpods and larvae consume developing seeds. In its lifetime, each larva will consume five seeds in a canola pod. Since each pod contains about 30 seeds, crop losses wouldn't be particularly severe if the damage ended there. But infestations of these pests can also bring several other forms of damage. When adults first migrate to crops in spring, they feed on buds and developing flowers, destroying many buds in the process. When mature, larvae bore through pods leaving small exit holes which can be invaded by fungal spores that germinate and destroy several more seeds within infested pods. Canola pods harboring weevil larvae shatter more frequently than non-infested pods. When adults of the new generation emerge in late summer, they puncture canola pods to feed on immature seeds and can destroy many more seeds within the pods."

Unfortunately there are no insecticides currently registered for control of the cabbage seedpod weevil. In 1999, Alberta Agriculture applied for, and received, emergency registration of deltamethrin for weevil control. It takes some time for agrochemical companies to build up the data base necessary to have products registered, so there will likely be an emergency registration situation again in 2000. "Growers should monitor their crops as they enter the rosette stage using a sweep net, and consider spraying at bud or early-flowering if weevil populations are two to three adults per sweep net sample or higher," Dosdall recommends

In 2000, canola growers will still be able to plant seed treated with lindane (Vitavax rs®) for controlling flea beetles. Lindane is being voluntarily withdrawn from the market and once that happens, growers will have to use alternative products. To date, Gaucho® is the only registered replacement product, but it is expected to be about two to three times more expensive than Vitavax rs®. The 2000 field season will be a good time for growers to experiment with ways of reducing their input costs for seed treatments.

"Flea beetles invade fields in spring from the field edges, so it may be possible to only use canola seed-treated with insecticide for two or three seeder passes on the field edges, rather than on the entire fields, and still obtain acceptable control of these pests," says Dosdall. "Research has also shown that flea beetles are much more damaging to crops grown under conventional tillage systems than in zero tillage. Growers using zero-till, especially in the northwestern (Barrhead, Westlock, Legal) and north central (Morinville, Fort Saskatchewan) regions of the province may be able to completely eliminate the use of insecticidal seed treatments."

While these pests are the ones of greatest concern to Alberta farmers in 2000, Alberta Agriculture staff are also carefully monitoring populations of orange wheat blossom midge.

"The orange wheat blossom midge has traditionally been a serious pest only in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but in recent years, its range has expanded considerably in east central Alberta, and minor crop losses occurred here in 1999," adds Dosdall. "Scouting for wheat midge is strongly recommended even though there are no records to date of spraying here for this pest. Our lucky streak with midge may soon run out."

Contact: *Lloyd Dosdall*
(780) 422-4911

Agriculture practices stabilize carbon loss and help reduce greenhouse gas effect in our environment

At FarmTech 2000, a conference for sustainable crop production management recently held in Red Deer, Dr. Wayne Lindwall, director of the Swift Current Semi Arid Prairie Research Centre, shared research data and information on greenhouse gas reduction and what agriculture is doing to help stabilize greenhouse gas emissions and enhance greenhouse sinks.

"The Canadian government has made substantial commitment to the global community to reduce national greenhouse gas emissions," says Russ Evans, with Alberta Conservation Tillage Society (ACTS), Carbon. "This commitment will require a considerable investment by Canadian industry and society. Right now, the agriculture industry's crop production sector is providing some short term relief."

Research being done by Dr. Lindwall's team centres around the study of optimum farming practices that will result in the storage of carbon in the soil. Canadian prairie soils are rich in organic matter, and using low disturbance, continuous cropping farming systems can increase organic matter. These practices remove carbon dioxide (CO2) from the air and store it as organic carbon in the soil.

The trapping, or sequestering of carbon in soil creates what is being termed a 'sink'. In greenhouse gas studies, there are two factors that must be measured, sources and sinks. Sources are processes or acts that release greenhouse gas, mostly human induced activities. Sinks are processes and activities that reduce greenhouse gas. Some other 'sink' activities are reforestation, increased photosynthesis and crop production.

"Dr. Lindwall, very realistically noted that while cropping methods that result in greater carbon sequestering in soil cannot eliminate the greenhouse gas effect, it can certainly slow it down and help manage it," says Peter Gamache, manager of Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), Edmonton. "Not only does reduced tillage and continuous cropping help reduce the greenhouse gas effect, but there is an economic benefit when retaining soil carbon. Management practices that add organic matter to the soil, generally improve soil and water conservation with additional benefits to the environment. Biological activity and biodiversity are greater in good quality soils. Soils with a higher carbon content have been shown to be more productive. Infiltration and water holding capacity is increased and the soil is more resistant to erosion."

A variety of agricultural land management practices have been identified that can help increase soil carbon content and improve the sustainability of a farming operation, these include:

- reduction in summer-fallow
- reduced tillage, direct seeding, no-till
- inclusion of legumes and/or grasses in crop rotations
- optimum and variable rate fertilization
- conversion of marginal crop land to perennial grass or trees
- rotational grazing, and high intensity/short duration grazing
- pasture improvement with better varieties and fertilization
- manure or compost application to land where feasible
- use of shelterbelts
- wetland restoration where feasible

"When discussing the importance of soils in the carbon cycle, Lindwall stated that soil scientists agree that it's possible to restore soil organic carbon levels to near their pre-cultivation levels with significant nutrient inputs and adoption of the best land management practices," adds Gamache. "To bring those levels back to pre-cultivation levels may take a decade or more, but starting with appropriate land management practices is a step in the right direction."

Alberta Agriculture agrologists, ARTI agronomists, and members of ACTS have a wealth of information on land management practices. Factsheets and other information on no-till and reduced tillage practices are available at all Alberta Agriculture district offices and from the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Alberta Agriculture agrologists and members of ARTI and ACTS are also available to help individual farmers determine the management practices best suited to their land. Call the local Alberta Agriculture office and ask to speak to a reduced tillage specialist.

Contact: *Peter Gamache*
(780) 427-3361

Crop Diagnostic Field Schools 2000

In 1991, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development agronomists Elston Solberg, Ieuan Evans and Denise Maurice saw the need for a school highlighting new techniques in crop production, and teaching diagnosis of problems in crop production systems to a growing agriculture industry. In response, the first Crop Diagnostic Field School was established at Ellerslie that year.

"Continued demand and successes have resulted in the field school being held annually with a turnout of approximately 900 attendees per year," says Keith Topinka, field school co-ordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton. "The year 2000 marks the 10th anniversary of the school. Attendees to the one-day sessions include a wide cross-section of people working in agriculture, including government and private agronomists, research, field and sales representatives from pesticide, fertilizer and seed companies, and farmers."

The diagnostic school was specifically designed to teach diagnostic techniques in an integrated fashion. It is meant to help participants identify problems associated with today's crop production systems. The school also provides information on recent developments in agronomy. Participants choose from modules including general agronomy, fertility, herbicides, insects, diseases, canola, and forages. This year, a pulse module will be added.

Instruction is provided by a team of Alberta Agriculture agronomy unit professionals, provincial entomologists, and regional and provincial crop specialists including Roger Andreiuk, Jay Byer, Dan Cole, Mike Dolinski, Lloyd Dosdall, Ieuan Evans, Peter Gamache, Jim Jones, Dan Heaney, Linda Hall, Murray McLelland, Mark Olson, Elston Solberg, Phil Thomas and Keith Topinka. Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI) personnel added their expertise in 1999.

"The school has been accredited by the Certified Crop Advisors (CCA) program," adds Topinka. "The success of the Crop Diagnostic Field School spawned a second field school specializing in fall seeded crops. Agronomy Unit staff have once again teamed up with crop specialists for three one-day sessions specializing in winter cereals and fall-seeded canola."

All Crop Diagnostic Field School sessions run for one day. Dates and locations are:

- Late June – fall seeded field school, Ellerslie
- July 13 to August 4 – diagnostic field school, Ellerslie

Schools are run on a cost recovery basis.

Contact: *Keith Topinka*
(780) 422-0891

Farmers' rights to water

Alberta's new *Water Act* (the Act) came into effect on January 1, 1999.

"One of the key provisions in the new Act is the protection of agricultural water supplies," says John Knapp, director of animal industry division with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "The Act can protect a farm's water supply in two clearly defined categories – the use of water for household purposes and the use of water for traditional agriculture purposes."

The Act defines household use of water as the use of up to 275,000 gallons of water per year for human consumption, sanitation, fire prevention and watering animals, gardens, lawns and trees. If a person owns or occupies land that has a water source (groundwater is included) and there is a residence on that land, that person is entitled to use up to 275,000 gallons from a water supply source on that land. The Act specifies this type of use as a statutory right which takes priority over all other uses.

"The new Act establishes a new category of traditional agriculture use. This applies to water used for raising animals or applying pesticides to crops up to a volume of 1.375 million gallons of water per year," adds Knapp. "If farmers used water for these purposes on or before January 1, 1999, they should apply to register their traditional agriculture water use soon. All traditional agricultural users are encouraged to register their highest sustained use of water during the years of 1996 to 1998. This registration will stay with the land."

Knapp points out that even if a producer feels his stock watering is covered by his statutory right, he should consider a registration.

Registration protects a landowner's right to use water by assigning the water source a priority number 'grandfathered' back to the date the water was first put to use.

"Many farmers have asked about the implications of the new legislation and what has to be done to register their water use," continues Ernie Hui, head of licensing and permitting standards branch, Alberta Environment. "This really is a protection for farmers. If they decide not to apply for a registration, they may continue to use water for agricultural purposes, but such use won't be protected in case of a water shortage."

Licences have been and will continue to be required for uses such as large feedlot, hog and dairy operations; irrigation uses; as well as municipal, industrial and commercial uses.

Application forms to register traditional agricultural use of water must be submitted by December 31, 2001. Information required for the application includes the source(s) of water supply, the date the water source was first used for raising animals or crops, and the volume of water being used.

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Staff in Alberta Environment's regional offices and in all Alberta Agriculture district offices can provide information on the application process. They are also happy to assist producers with filling out the application form.

Contact:	John Knapp	Ernie Hui
	(780) 427-2166	(780) 427-9496

First Cattle Identification Program tags approved for use

The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) is has made available the first 12 ear tags approved for use in the Canadian Cattle Identification Program.

"Twenty-two types of tags underwent testing for retention, readability and ability to withstand tampering," says Cindy McCreath, communications manager, with CCIA, Calgary. "The 12 tags approved by the CCIA Board of Directors meet the CCIA standards for use in the program."

Ten bar code and two electronic tags are currently accepted into the program. The approved bar code tags are:

- Allflex Junior (2 ¼" x 2 ¼" plastic dangle tag)
- Allflex Large (3" x 2 ¼" plastic dangle tag)
- Allflex Maxi (3 ¾" x 3" plastic dangle tag)
- Duflex Medium (1 7/8" x 1 ¾" plastic dangle tag)
- Duflex Large (2 ¾" x 2 ¼" plastic dangle tag)
- Reyflex Small (2 ¼" x 2 ¼" plastic dangle tag)
- Reyflex Large (3" x 2 ½" plastic dangle tag)
- Zee Tags Medium (2 ¼" x 1 ¾" plastic dangle tag)
- Zee Tags Large (3 ¼" x 2 ½" plastic dangle tag)
- Zee Tags Extra Large (4" x 2 ¾" plastic dangle tag)
- The two approved electronic tags are:
- Allflex (button tag)
- Destron Fearing e-tag (button tag)

"Approved colors of tags that meet readability requirements are white, yellow and pink," adds McCreath. "The color lime green, as used in the Canadian Angus Certification Program (CACP), is currently being trialed. CACP tags (Reyflex Large) are accepted by CCIA. Additional tags and colors are undergoing testing and further options will be announced as they become available."

Official CCIA ear tags bear a nine digit identification number that is unique to the animal that wears it and a trademark consisting of a three-quarter maple leaf and the letters CA. This trademark indicates that the tag has been approved for use by the CCIA. Tags can be purchased directly from some manufacturers and from approved distributors and dealers. Further information on cost and availability of tags can be obtained by contacting tag manufacturers (contact information listed below).

"The Canadian Cattle Identification Program is an industry-led system for individually identifying cattle in Canada," explains McCreath. "After the target date of December 31, 2000, cattle in Canada are to be ear tagged with an official CCIA ear tag prior to leaving their herd of origin. Producers are encouraged to begin tagging their animals before the target start-up date. This program will help maintain market access for Canadian beef and cattle, help protect the health of the Canadian cattle herd, and reassure consumers the industry is proud of and stands behind the health and safety of its product."

A photo of currently approved tags is available to media upon request. Approved tags can also be viewed on the CCIA website <**http://www.cattle.ca/ccia**>. A brochure with tag photos and contact information for manufacturers is also being made available.

For information on tag availability, contact:

Allflex
1-800-989-8247
fax: (972) 456-3882

Destron Fearing (Duflex)
1-800-328-0118
fax: 1-800-328-4565

Ketchum Manufacturing Inc. (Reyflex)
(613) 722-3451
fax: (613) 722-5612

Vetoquinol N.A. Inc. (Zee Tags)
1-800-265-8675
fax: (519) 621-8725

For further information on the Canadian Cattle Identification Program contact:

Cindy McCreath
(403) 275-8558
<mccreathc@cattle.ca>

Canadian Cattle Identification Agency
(877) 909-2333

Planning a herbaceous perennial border

Planning a perennial bed is an exciting process. The rewards are beauty and color with little maintenance required for years to come. Many perennials have a short bloom time, but a well planned border gives the yard a changing vista from spring to summer to fall.

"An important step in planning is identifying any trouble spots in the yard since it is easier to match the plants to the growing conditions," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at the Crop Diversification Centre, South (CDCS), Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Brooks. "View the yard and ask these questions. Is the site full sun, shade or part shade? Be aware that if planning this border in the winter, the sun will be in a different location in the sky, what is in the shade in January, may not be in the shade in June. Is reflected heat from white colored buildings or even windows going to cause burning to the plants in isolated areas?"

There are many other things to consider during the planning stage. Is the soil wet, normal or dry? "Most plants hate wet feet," adds Barkley. "If the soil retains moisture for a week it is considered a normal draining soil. Some spots tend to be drier than others, especially west facing hillsides or spots under trees. Give your perennial bed a head start by picking plants that will thrive in the existing soil conditions."

Is the soil texture sandy, clay or silty, or a mixture? Clay soils tend to be wet and slow to warm in the spring, sandy soils are drier and warm up quickly. Adding organic matter, (well rotted manure, peat moss, leaf mould, or compost) can help sandy soils hold moisture and clay soils open up and drain better. Also, consider the pH of the soil. This is best determined by a soil test. Plants preferring acidic soils can be a challenge to grow in a alkaline soil.

Which direction do the prevailing winds come from during the summer and during the winter? "Summer winds can cause damage to heavier and taller perennials like peonies and delphiniums," says Barkley. "Delicate flowers can be bruised or torn also. Winter winds can effect where the snow lays in the yard. If you have lived on the property for a few years, it's probably pretty easy to remember where the snow stays the longest."

Finally, are there any physical structures in the yard that can be incorporated in the design or will add a challenge to the design? Think about the trees, fences and out buildings. Are there flowering trees and shrubs that could tie in with the flower color of the perennials? How far is the water source, and can the hose reach the entire border. If a fountain or lighting will be added, where is the closest electricity source?

"Once these questions have been answered – it's time to think about drawing the blueprint," continues Barkley. "Consider the style of border. A traditional border is made up of all herbaceous perennials, while a mixed border has shrubs, annuals and bulbs mixed in. Formal gardens have geometric shapes, while informal gardens have soft curves and a very natural look. Today's architecture and life styles seem to lend themselves more willingly to the informal type of landscaping."

A perennial border is usually planned so that it can be seen. Placement will determine whether the vantage point is from the patio, the kitchen window or both? Even though there will likely be only one main viewing point, check the vista from other parts of the yard. Island beds are viewed from all sides with the tallest plants in the centre, while a border is viewed from two or three sides, tallest plants in the back. Aim to keep the border in scale with the rest of the yard.

Barkley concludes, saying, "A well planned border gives a feeling of peacefulness through balance. This is obtained when the elements on either side of centre are similar in visual size, a clump of plants on one side can balance the visual weight of a large plant on the other. Keep the plants in scale with each other. Repeating texture, shape or color adds to the harmony of the border. Plants can be repeated or different plants used that have a similar flower color, texture or shape.

"If the border is wide, it's a good idea to have an 45-60 cm path between walls or buildings and the border. This allows air circulation to the plants, ease of maintenance to the border and, even though painting the fence may not be necessary as the border planning is happening, it may have to be done eventually. Stepping stones through out the border is also a nice touch and allows space for walking among the plants."

Alberta Yards and Gardens – What to Grow, an Alberta Agriculture publication, has a chapter on perennials. The publication describes flower color, height, growing requirements and special features of over 100 perennials. The book costs $ 15 (plus GST) and is available at all Alberta Agriculture district offices and from the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Orders can be placed by phone, call 1-800-292-5697. Please add $2 (plus GST) for shipping and handling. VISA and MasterCard are accepted.

Contact: *Shelley Barkley*
(403) 362-1305

Will it sell? – understanding your market

Before beginning a new farm enterprise producers need to understand their market. Producers need to know who will buy their product or use their services, how to sell to buyers, the amount they want to buy and the price they are willing to pay. Good marketing skills are especially important for new or unusual enterprises as there is often no agency or association that can assist in the location and development of new market opportunities.

"Many producers develop a product or service and assume someone will buy it rather than looking at the market place and customer needs and then developing a product to meet those needs," says Janice McGregor, rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Morinville.

Market research is not a crystal ball that can predict future sales. Market research can, however, help you identify trends and develop a marketing strategy to capitalize on those trends. Predictions of future market conditions may include production and consumption levels, prices, packaging and processing trends. Producers should analyze all information collected carefully as data for some products may be out of date and national trends may not apply in the local market.

Market research techniques – you don't need any advanced training to do most market research. Good market research boils down to asking the right questions and looking in the right places for answers. Many producers start with secondary research involving information and data that has already been published. Information on demographics, consumption patterns and market trends is available from libraries, government offices, universities, trade magazines and computer databases. Secondary research is the easiest and least expensive way to obtain market information.

"People often find they can't get all the answers to their questions through secondary research," adds McGregor. "Primary research is important if you are considering an innovative enterprise, a new market or a local market for which little published data exists. Good primary research can be simple and inexpensive. Common methods used include observation, surveys, personal interviews and test marketing. Primary research can help determine the number, time of day and direction of travel of potential customers. It can also help identify customer buying habits, likes and dislikes, price preferences and current suppliers."

Interpreting data – when gathering market information, it's important to note that it can be interpreted in a variety of ways, depending on the type of primary research conducted, who was contacted or how the questions were asked. Results may be skewed if questions are slanted to elicit expected responses. A positive response to a survey or interview does not always translate into a positive action. Just because 80 per cent of respondents say they would buy a product doesn't mean they will.

Marketing options – a marketing option is any method used to sell or distribute a product or service. Research helps the producer find options that most effectively reach the target market. If an enterprise is fairly conventional, it may be decided to use dealers, co-operatives, processors or auctioneers. Farmers who have developed innovative or nontraditional enterprises, often decide to use a total marketing process. They are involved in the market research, production, promotion, distribution and sales. Processing and marketing have potentially higher returns than producing a raw product. By taking an active role in marketing products or services, you can maintain control over the quality, image and price.

"Active marketing is important but takes commitment, skills and dollars," says McGregor. "Focus on the most promising options, but be sure to use more than one market. Some marketing options include: selling at farmers' markets, selling at trade shows or fairs, establishing u-pick operations, operating a roadside stand, selling directly to restaurants, or marketing through a catalogue. Try to be flexible with the marketing options to operate in the market now and in the future."

Evaluating research results – Evaluation of the market for a new enterprise should answer the following questions:

- What are you selling or providing?
- Who will use or buy this product?
- What is the best way to market this product?
- What is the demand for this product?
- How strong is the competition in the target market?
- What are the future trends for this product?
- What prices are you likely to receive?
- What volume are you likely to sell?

"The answers to these questions should help you to make a judgment on the status of the target market," says McGregor. 'If entering a well established market with little growth potential, you will have to be creative and develop a market niche to successfully sustain the business. By analyzing and understanding as much information as possible, you are in the best position to guide a new business successfully through the inevitable changes in the market."

Contact: *Janice McGregor*
(780) 939-4351

Looking for new marketing ideas?

A new window of opportunity may just require a change in perspective. Some things to consider are your own particular purchasing habits last year.

- Did you buy sausage, cookie dough or chicken breasts as a fund raiser last year?
- Have you ever received a gift basket full of specialty food products, bought food from a catalogue or released your VISA number on-line?
- Have you given any thought to marketing your saskatoon jelly, grass-fed hamburger or organic salsa in these ways?

"If you're looking to increase sales, perhaps it's time to rethink how you access your target market," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist-business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Westlock. "Some questions producers should ask themselves are: Who is my target market? How do I access them now? What do they do? What do they read? Where are they located? What do their families do? How else can I reach them?"

For example, consider a target customer who is a 35 to 55 year old, college educated woman from a two income family with 2.2 children and living at a T0C 5P6 postal code. If this customer is currently being accessed her through specialty gift stores, is there another way that can be used to put the product in front of her?

By researching this target customer several other avenues may present themselves. When conducting the research, consider, does the target customer:

- have children who are fund raising for a school or extra curricular activity?
- eat out at high-end restaurants? Does she read City Palate? Is she short of time?
- shop from the catalogue?
- ever given a gift basket as a gift (why or why not)?
- surf the net?

"Once you know your target customer, you may want to compare the benefits of the various marketing venues discussed in the millennium edition of the ***NorthWest Processor*** newsletter," says Engel. "This issue highlights fund raising, catalogue, gift basket and E-commerce sales. Many industries, including food businesses, have pursued these opportunities and specialty product businesses may find that they can also be applied quite effectively."

These different venues offer processors the opportunity to achieve targeted growth through the development of target specific customer lists, capitalize on improved profit margins and sales, and explore dynamic frontiers. As with adopting any new marketing method, there are serious logistical issues that need careful management. Heavy and fragile products offer unique distribution and transportation challenges. Dealing with returns can be very challenging.

"The bottom line is, the bottom line keeps changing," says Engel. "Look outside the box. Turn around and look out a different window in the office, get a new perspective. Try some planned spontaneity. Investigate an unconventional marketing venue."

To receive the **NorthWest Processor** newsletter free of charge, call (780) 349-4465.

Contact: *Kerry Engel*
(780) 349-4465

Alberta agriculture estimates

Many of the estimates listed were jointly prepared by Statistics Canada and the Statistics and Data Development Unit of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Cattle and calves:

- Alberta continues to lead the country in cattle and calf inventories (5.11 million head), followed by Saskatchewan (2.25 million head) and Ontario (2.0 million head)
- currently, Alberta accounts for more than one-half (55.9 per cent) of the total Western Canadian herd of 9.13 million head and 40.3 per cent of the national total of 12.65 million
- as of January 1, 2000, the estimated total inventory of cattle and calves on farms in the province was 5.11 million head, up 0.1 per cent from the January 1, 1999 figure of 5.10 million
- Alberta reported a total of 102,000 milk cows as of January 1, 2000, down 1.0 per cent from the previous year. Increasing milk productivity was among the factors influencing the decline

Pigs:

- across Canada, Alberta ranks fourth in pig inventories, behind Quebec (3.69 million head), Ontario (3.44 million head) and Manitoba (1.87 million)
- Alberta currently accounts for approximately 37 per cent of the estimated total western Canadian pig population of 4.75 million head and over 14 per cent of the national total of 12.26 million head
- estimates at January 1, 2000, show the size of the Alberta herd declining by 4.5 per cent, with the total number of pigs on farm at 1.77 million head, compared to 1.85 million a year ago. Virtually all of the decline was attributed to market hogs which were down 5.4 per cent to 1.58 million head, from 1.67 million a year ago

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- the sow herd is once again expanding, posting the first year over year increase in the past seven quarters. As of January 1, 2000, sows and bred gilts were estimated at 181,000, an increase of 4.0 per cent from a year earlier

Sheep and lambs:

- some flock rebuilding is occurring in Alberta. The January 1, 2000 sheep and lamb estimate puts the provincial total at 155,100 head, up 2.1 per cent over 1999, and marks the second straight year of growth
- all of the flock expansion was attributed to an increase in the number of breeding animals. Breeding ewes were estimated at 107,000, up 7.8 per cent from 99,300 in 1999; replacement lambs increased 18.9 per cent to 14,500 head, from 12,200 in 1999
- Alberta currently accounts for about 47 per cent of the total estimated sheep and lamb population of 329,600 head in Western Canada, and roughly 23 per cent of the Canadian total of 683,800 head. The province ranks second behind Ontario (191,400 head) in sheep and lamb inventories

Beekeeping:

- preliminary estimates show 1999 to be a less than average year for honey production, with 20.5 million pounds of honey produced
- 1999 estimates are that Alberta produced 27 per cent of the national total of 76.4 million pounds of honey
- the total value of Alberta produced honey in 1998 was $34.0 million (36 per cent of the national total of $93.5 million). Comparable estimates for 1999 are not yet available
- in 1999, the estimated number of beekeepers in Alberta was 725, while nationally the total was 10,852
- Alberta reported managing an estimated 205,000 colonies in 1999, unchanged from 1998
- in 1999, approximately 55,000 colonies were used in pollination services for the production of hybrid canola seed. These bees produce very little honey

Estimates of the 1999 crop production of principal field crops:

- in 1999, all wheat production (winter wheat, spring wheat and durum wheat) totalled over 8.14 million metric tonnes (299,000,000 bushels), up significantly from the 1998 total of 6.75 million metric tonnes
- oats production is estimated at 864,000 metric tonnes for 1999 (56,000,000 bushels)
- production of barley is estimated at almost 5.99 million metric tonnes (275,000,000 bushels) for 1999, up from production totals of 5.66 million metric tonnes in 1998
- canola production reached a provincial all time record in 1999 to close to 2.97 million metric tonnes or 131,000,000 bushels. Production figures for 1998 were 2.47 million metric tonnes
- dry peas showed a significant increase in production for 1999. Production in 1998 was almost 488,000 metric tonnes, and is estimated at 531,000 metric tonnes in 1999 (19,510,000 bushels)

Contact: *Don Hansen* *(780) 422-2906* *Reynold Jaipaul* *(780) 427-5376*

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Agri-News

March 6, 2000

Farm fatality numbers down

"The number of Albertans who lost their lives on farms last year are down significantly, and that's encouraging," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, head of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm safety program, Edmonton. "In 1999, there were 17 farm fatalities in Alberta, compared to 28 in 1996, 18 in 1997 and 25 in 1998."

A study of farm fatalities in the province from 1996 to 1999 was recently completed and released. Highlights from this study include:

- all together 88 fatality cases were reported during the four year study period, 1996 - 1999. The farm fatality trends were as follows: 1996 – 28; 1997 – 18; 1998 – 25; 1999 – 17
- farm machinery accounted for 52 fatalities or 59 per cent of reported cases
- tractors represented the highest number of farm fatalities (25), followed by farm trucks (11), then combines (3), swathers (2), mowers (2) and all terrain vehicles (1). Other unidentified farm machinery accounted for 8 deaths
- non-farm machinery claimed 36 lives, or 41 per cent of reported cases. Incidences related to water represented the highest number of non-machinery farm fatalities (7), followed by livestock (5), then grain handling (4), fall from height (4), wood (3), chemicals and pesticides (3), well cellars (2) and electrocution (2). Each of silos, trenches, knives, twine, manure pits and bees accounted for one fatality
- adults above 60 years old represented the highest number of fatalities (26). They also represented the only victims of livestock
- children aged 0 - 19 years came second. These children account for 24 fatalities. Of these, 10 were aged 0 - 5 years old
- most fatalities occurred in the southern and central regions, each representing 23 cases. Northeast region (16) was next, followed by northwest region (15) and lastly the Peace region (11)
- fatalities are relatively lower from January through April when calving is the major activity
- in May, farm fatalities begin to rise when seeding starts and reach a peak in July when haying is intensive

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Agri-News **Publishing Branch, Tel: (780) 427-2121 Fax: (780) 427-2861**

Internet site: www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agrinews Editor e-mail: agrinews@agric.gov.ab.ca

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- farm fatalities remain high from August to December as harvesting becomes the preoccupation

"Farm safety messages are only effective if they are acted on. Safety is an essential part of farming and farm living, and Albertans are heeding that message," says Kyeremanteng. "Safety on the farm is a year-long, everyday necessity. Injury incidents can happen at any time not just during peak seasons such as seeding and harvest. Cautious and safe work practices always need to be employed. After all, **A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow**."

Contact: *Solomon Kyeremanteng*
(780) 427-4227

Equity sought for Alberta producers

"It's wrong for the federal Agriculture Minister to suggest that Alberta farmers haven't been hurt or aren't as badly off as farmers in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Parts of, Alberta are in a better position, but I would challenge the Minister to tour areas like the northeastern and Peace regions, as I have, to see first-hand just how difficult a time they are having. These farmers have had to deal with the change in transportation policy as well as low commodity prices and drought."

Ty Lund
Minister

Equal treatment for Alberta producers will be the key issue on the table Wednesday as Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister Ty Lund meets with federal officials in Ottawa.

Lund has arranged meetings with federal Agriculture and Agrifood Minister Lyle Vanclief, federal Justice Minister Anne McLellan and the Prime Minister's office.

On behalf of Premier Klein and the provincial government, Lund will demand Alberta producers be included in the recent funding program announced for Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The program is supposedly aimed at assisting those producers hurt by the changes in grain transportation policy. Lund spoke with Minister Vanclief by phone after the funding agreement was announced and the Premier sent a letter to the Prime Minister expressing frustration over Alberta's exclusion from the program

"This new arrangement is made under the premise that grain transportation costs have increased dramatically," says Lund. "I will remind the Minister that those costs have not only increased in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but here as well."

Lund will also ask for the complete implementation of the Estey/Kroeger reports during the meetings. In Calgary on February 18, 2000, Minister Vanclief said it was unlikely the reports would be implemented in full.

"We have the blueprint to help us deal with the high costs and low efficiencies facing the grain transportation system," Lund says. "We don't need to waste any time in implementing it now, particularly if, as the federal Agriculture Minister has said, the only impediment was the negative impact on Saskatchewan and Manitoba. They just announced a means to deal with that."

Since the federal funding announcement, Lund has spoken with the ministers of agriculture from BC, Ontario and Quebec. Like Alberta, these provinces were excluded from any discussion about this program, yet had sat in good faith at the table when issues surrounding farm income were discussed.

"Up to this point, we have jointly participated in developing a national approach on farm income issues," Lund says. "The success of this kind of process depends on transparency and collective decision making. Whether or not Alberta continues with this process will depend on the results of my discussion in Ottawa over the next two days."

Lund will fly to the federal capital this afternoon and return Wednesday at the conclusion of the meetings.

Contact: *Michael Lohner*
Office of the Minister
Alberta Agriculture
(780) 910-2864

Ken Moholitny
Program Services
Alberta Agriculture
(780) 427-3078

Teens can start planning farm safety message now

Producing a farm safety commercial for the A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow campaign will win an Alberta student a $2,500 scholarship and a video camera for their school. The winning commercial will also be aired for the first time during a Hockey Night in Canada Play-off broadcasts.

"We're giving grade eight through 12 students the chance to exercise their creativity and produce their own farm safety television commercial," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm safety program, Edmonton. "Last year, we received video productions from 50 Alberta students. Their farm safety commercials were well done and very creative."

This part of the farm safety campaign is sponsored by CBC Television and PanCanadian Petroleum Limited.

"Safety is an important message and what better way to get the message across than have teens speak to teens," says Brian Gray, network sales manager for CBC Television in Alberta. "We are pleased to be involved in such a positive campaign that delivers such an important message to all those involved in farming and ranching in the province."

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"We're proud to sponsor a program that aligns so closely with our commitment to safety education," says Charline Boudreau, director of Community Investment at PanCanadian

This year's campaign was officially launched on February 28, 2000 at the Vegreville Composite High School. Contest brochures and entry forms are being sent to all rural Alberta junior and senior high schools. The brochures will explain contest rules and provide video tips.

"We are giving Alberta students a 'heads-up' to get them thinking about farm safety and presenting their message in the most creative and active way possible," adds Kyeremanteng. "We know there are many very talented young Albertans in the province and we want to hear from all of them."

Second prize in the contest is a $1,500 scholarship and third prize is a $1,000 scholarship. Other prizes will be awarded to all entrants.

Contact: *Solomon Kyeremanteng*
(780) 427-4227
Charline Boudreau
(403) 716-4007

Brian Gray
(780) 468-2352

Safety – the driving force behind the AMA's sponsorship of 4-H

The Alberta Motor Association's recently-announced financial contribution to Alberta's 4-H program reinforces the AMA's education and safety initiatives aimed at youth.

"The emphasis 4-H places on the safety of its members and volunteers parallels our Mission Possible program," says Dan VanKeeken, AMA spokesman. Alberta's 4-H program gives youth opportunity to safely *Learn To Do By Doing* through their club projects, adds VanKeeken. "These safe techniques learned in 4-H are taken home to the family farm."

Under the sponsorship agreement, the AMA will provide funds for Club Week, a 4-H career highlight. Members aged 15 and older participate in a week-long personal growth experience. Club Week challenges delegates to realize their potential, recognize their weaknesses, develop their strengths, grow through group processes and nurture a global focus on how families, peers, society and our country fit into our world.

"Both the AMA and 4-H are grassroots organizations with a province-wide network of dedicated volunteers," explains VanKeeken. "We chose to also sponsor Provincial 4-H Leaders' Conference because it is a volunteer recognition and training event."

Provincial 4-H Leaders' Conference is an annual event where delegates build on their leadership training skills. In mid-January, close to 300 volunteer 4-H leaders participated in education sessions on a variety of topics including Ag-Biotechnology, Enhancing Resiliency in Youth, and Employability.

4-H in Alberta is dynamic in its programming, growing in its membership and open to opportunities to welcome new sponsors. "As a result of providing financial and in-kind support companies can directly invest in the development of effective leaders and the growth of our agriculture and food industry," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's 4-H Branch.

For more information on joining 4-H call (780) 422-4H4H (toll free through the RITE line at 310-0000) or visit the 4-H pages on Alberta Agriculture's internet site at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h**>

Contact: *Henry Wiegman*
(780) 422 -4H4H

Dan VanKeeken
(780) 430 5693

4-H is 'Safety First'

Alberta's 4-H program gives youth opportunity to safely *Learn To Do By Doing* through their club projects. "Along with the fun of learning and working with animals and machinery comes responsibility," says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H media and marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

4-H in Alberta is designed for youth aged nine to twenty. Many of the projects involve working with animals that very young children are not physically strong enough to control. Livestock club members learn proper handling techniques. A woodworking club member learns ways to work safely with tools. Snowmobile club members learn safe and skilful operation of the snowmobile.

"The safe techniques learned in 4-H are taken home to the family farm," adds Sullivan. "During the club year many 4-H clubs supplement their safe practices with training in basic first aid. Even junior 4-H'ers learn how to react in emergencies. Agriculture production is hazardous and the 4-H experience teaches members to be alert to the work-related hazards. But accidents do happen and first aid training can be a lifesaver."

Safety in 4-H doesn't end with spring achievement days and livestock sales. 4-H camp counsellors receive emergency first aid training by Eric Jones, senior safety officer with Alberta Agriculture. "We focus on prevention and first aid in a camp setting," says Jones. "We tour the site and trails to spot hazards like bee hives and uneven paths. The sessions have helped decrease the incidence of injury during the camps."

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Jones also conducts an annual safety audit of the Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle Lake. This includes the lodge, dormitory, trails and beachfront area. With staff and 4-H counsellors, Jones developed emergency procedures to use at the Centre. Besides the safety plans, there are two St. John's Ambulance certified first aiders on staff, the campers to counsellor ratio is eight to one, and all camps with waterfront activities are supervised by a qualified lifeguard. "We want our members to experience the challenges and fun of camp in the safest conditions possible," adds Sullivan.

For more information on 4-H call (780) 422-4H4H or visit the Alberta 4-H web site at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h**>.

Contact: *Carol Sullivan*
4-H Branch
(780) 422-4H4H

Safety City promotes farm safety, too

A farm safety component is planned as part of the Red Deer Kiwanis Safety City, opening in May 2000. The scaled down city promotes safety training for children and adults and will include a farm safety section with working models of farm machinery as well as other displays.

"The concept behind Safety City is to provide and promote safety training in a realistic and non-threatening environment," says Ross Hay, chair of the Farm Safety Component of Safety City, Red Deer. "Static displays and working models of farm equipment will show danger points that children and adults should be aware of. There will also be seasonal instruction on all-terrain-vehicles and snowmobiles, showing the proper handling of these machines and the precautions that should be practised."

The farm safety component will include electricity displays, complete with overhead power lines, buried cables, building wiring schematics and instruction on how to work with electrical lines and equipment safely. Farm water dug-outs will be featured where the dangers of thin ice and deep water hazard will be shown. Demonstrating the safe handling of chemicals and dealing with noise levels when working with farm equipment will round out the farm safety section.

"As a former member of the Kiwanis International family, I am delighted that the Kiwanis Club of Red Deer is spearheading such an endeavour in central Alberta, and that they are including a timely farm safety component. After all, agriculture is prominent in central Alberta," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, head of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Farm Safety Program, Edmonton. "Incidentally, it was during my presidency of the Kiwanis Club of south Edmonton that the Kiwanis Safety City in Edmonton was built."

The ultimate aim of Safety City and of the Farm Safety Component is to reduce or eliminate accidents, injuries and deaths. The Red Deer Kiwanis Safety City is located on 3.5 acres of land near 30th Avenue and 55th Street. The facility will be used by clubs, families, schools, corporations and organizations in Red Deer and the surrounding districts.

Alberta has Safety Cities already established in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat.

Contact:	*Ross Hay*	*Solomon Kyeremanteng*
	(403) 341-4541	*(780) 427-4227*

CASP at work in Alberta

Farm safety should be second-nature to everyone. But, it's not! There are numerous statistics to remind us of that fact. The Canadian Agricultural Farming Injury Surveillance Program study reports that farming is the most hazardous occupation in Canada, as it is in the United States. While injuries place third behind cardiovascular disease and cancer as a cause of premature death, the potential years of life lost that are attributable to injuries exceed the total for these other two disease classes combined. (Fatal Farm Injuries in Canada 1990-1996 (1999).

"As the provincial coordinator for the Canadian Agriculture Safety Program (CASP), Women of Unifarm believe it's what we see and what we do over and over again, that makes the difference in the coming generation of farmers," says Shirley Dyck CASP -Alberta provincial project coordinator, Edmonton. "As agricultural operators, parents and grandparents we try our best to remember to practice safety, and to show our children the safe way to do things on and around our farms."

During the 1999-2000 project year, CASP funded approximately 24 projects across Canada, of which three are in Alberta. In southern Alberta, the North American Farm and Environmental Safety Centre located in Raymond are visiting children at school in the kindergarten to grade six level, encouraging them to make farm safety and environmental practices an everyday occurrence in their lives and in their family's life. Another project underway by the Women of Unifarm, is an interactive rural health and farm safety display. This colorful display provides information, prompts awareness and action in farming communities to choose the right clothing and equipment for the job, and reduce the risk of injury and fatality on the farm. It not only presents information on equipment, illustrating safety for hearing, respiratory and personal body protection, but includes samples of safe clothing.

"The media has played a significant role in getting out our message," says Dyck. "Presently, CFCN-CTV Lethbridge Television has produced a series of commercials depicting the dos and don'ts to help keep our children safe on the farm."

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The coming project year 2000-01, commences April 1, 2000. There promises to be a host of excellent ideas and projects for rural health and farm safety – from day camps, photo contests, building model structures for children to visit and learn about working and playing safe in agriculture, to a farm safety management program for mom and dad and commercials and spot announcements to remind Albertans that safety means health and life!

"A thought to consider," adds Dyck, "the old saying 'It won't happen to me', is just a thought. Unfortunately, that thought can end up being 'How could this happen to me'. Don't let it happen. Reduce the risk, protect your health, and live long and happy with family and friends. Farming is a business, and like a business, the risks must be managed. Always remember to wear your safety belt and exercise caution. Practice "Farm Safety Week" 52 weeks of the year, not just this week."

The Canadian Agriculture Safety Program is a four-year program guided by the Canadian Coalition for Agricultural Safety and Rural Health. Interested groups may apply for funding assistance for farm safety and rural health projects and programs by contacting Shirley Dyck at Women of Unifarm, Suite 220, 10403 - 172 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5S 1K9, or phone (780) 452-7605, fax (780) 452-3708, or e-mail **<sdyck@compusmart.ab.ca>**

Contact *Shirley Dyck*
(780) 452-7605

Agri-News Briefs

Calgary Seed and Hay Show

The 52nd annual ***Seed and Hay Show*** is being held twice this year. The first show is in the Agriculture Building, Stampede Park, Calgary on March 5 to 7, 2000. The second planned exhibit is at the Calgary Stampede, July 7 to 16, 2000. The exhibit promotes an educational perspective about the agriculture industry, showing consumers where their food comes from. The Seed Fair and Hay Show will help educate agriculture producers about new varieties of seed and forages and tell consumers about the products that result from those crops. "Giving new information and helping others become more aware of what's new in the industry is one of the most rewarding elements of the Show," says Tom Earle, a third generation rancher from Cremona. There will be over 300 entries on display, with over $8,000 in prize money and awards up for grabs. The top five Grand Aggregate Exhibitors will receive a total of $3,500 in John Deere merchandise. For more information, visit the Calgary Stampede website at: **<www.Calgary-Stampede.com/new99/about_us/agriculture_index.html>**

Hooves of History 2000

It's not too early to begin planning if you're thinking of joining the ***Hooves of History 2000 Cattle Drive***. The drive will take place from September 27 to 30, 2000. Beginning on September 27, some 2,000 riders will drive up to 1,000 head of cattle through the Rocky Mountain Foothills to Cochrane. The registration cost can be calculated one of two ways, $150 (plus GST) and a 750 pound animal (cow or steer) or $850 (plus GST) for two riders.

The price includes the three-day drive, three nights camping, feed for livestock, all meals from Wednesday night to Saturday morning and the Saturday night barbecue. Horses are available at an additional cost. A portion of the entry fee qualifies for a charitable tax receipt. For more information, contact the Western Heritage Centre in Cochrane (403) 932-3514 or visit the Centre's website at **<www.whcs.ab.ca>**.

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Take a little extra time for safety-sake

A few moments can make all the difference when working on or around farm machinery. A few things to always keep in mind are:

- don't rush – take time to think and plan the safest way to do a job
- prepare for the job at hand – this includes assembling materials and making sure equipment and tools are working properly
- only do one thing at a time
- take regular coffee breaks – accidents usually happen when concentration level is low or you are drowsy
- hire some help if needed – working hours into the night after a full workday is dangerous
- wear protective clothing – never wear loose or ragged clothing around working machinery
- don't let the auger go barefoot – while auger shoes may slow down the job, they prevent injuries
- keep machinery shields and guards in place – a little inconvenience is worth the protection these devices provide
- know how to operate your equipment – be familiar with the manual that comes with a new machine or piece of equipment
- install seatbelts and a roll-over prevention structure on older tractors
- always check to be sure small children aren't nearby before starting equipment
- set a good example for young Albertans, for safety-sake

For further information on farm safety, contact Solomon Kyeremanteng, head of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Farm Safety program, (780) 427-4227.

Open house at the BCE

The Bison Centre of Excellence (BCE) was established in response to the needs of the fast growing Alberta bison industry. It represents a unique partnership between government and industry. The goal of the BCE is to provide bison producers a one stop source of leading edge, reliable and accurate information about the bison industry in the province. Alberta's bison industry has an annual increase in provincial herd size of about 20 to 25 per cent. There are presently approximately 50,000 bison animals being raised on over 700 ranches in Alberta. The BCE has planned an open house at the facility, 4301 - 50 Street in Leduc on March 7, 2000, and again on April 12, 2000. The open houses will run from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. on both dates. For more information, contact Judy Kohlsmith at (780) 986-4100.

Pasture poultry w

Pasture poultry producers and anyone considering raising pasture poultry, are encouraged to attend the Pasture Poultry Workshop 2000 being held at the Camrose Arts Society on April 14, 2000. Al Keshwani, Rochester Hatcheries, will speak on poultry breeds, vaccinating chicks and brooding techniques. Miles Bel and Gwen Brown, Banner Feeds, will discuss feed rations, both organic and natural. Jeff mattocks, Fertrell Company, Pennsylvania, will present information on bird nutrition and the vitamin/mineral requirements of birds on pasture and will cover poultry health and the causes, symptoms and remedies for many problems producers can experience with pasture poultry. The workshop is offered at no charge, however, pre-registration is required as space is limited. Please call Ron or Sheila Hamilton at the Sunworks Farm, Camrose (780) 672-9799 or call toll free 1-877-393-3133. Registration can be e-mailed also at **<sunworks@telusplanet.net>**.

GIS conference

An interprovincial conference, Management Issues in Agricultural GIS is being held in Edmonton on March 21 to 23, 2000. The conference is a follow-up to the GIS in Agriculture Workshops held in 1999. The conference provides an opportunity to discuss management issues in developing GIS for agricultural areas. Experts from Canada and the U.S. will speak on topics such as data sharing; which applications do what; and, options in purchasing and building GIS technology. GIS applications for manure management, conservation planning and watershed management will also be discussed. Registration fee is $150 (plus GST) per person. Cheques should be made payable to Alberta Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The conference is hosted by Agriculture and Agri Food Canada and the Departments of Agriculture of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. For further information or to register, contact Rhonda Erickson, conservation and development branch, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (780) 427-3907.

Agri-News

March 13, 2000

Dates revised for Ag Summit regional meetings

To accommodate an unexpectedly large response from the public over the regional meeting portion of Ag Summit 2000, new dates have been planned and more locations have been added to the list.

Brian Heidecker, Ag Summit 2000 co-chair, says that the interest in the meetings exceeded expectations. "We have had interest from many groups and individuals, in addition to the direction we were given at the Leader's Workshop in Red Deer at the beginning of February," Heidecker says. "We are really pleased to see such interest."

Ag Summit 2000's other co-chair, Charlie Mayer, says the dates have been pushed back to April and the details have all been finalized. The meetings will begin on April 4, 2000 in Drumheller. In total, 12 regional meetings will be held in various places around the province. All meetings are scheduled to take place from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. All participants are asked to pre-register to attend the regional meeting in their area by calling their local Alberta Agriculture district office.

"There are a lot of great ideas out there and we are really looking forward to the input that all the participants will have," adds Mayer. "I think that as many ideas as Albertans can put forward will really help us reach a realistic action plan that is the goal of the Summit process."

Albertans not able to attend the regional meetings will also have a means to participate in Ag Summit 2000. An interactive portion on the Ag Summit 2000 web site will be opened by the end of March to allow anyone to share their opinions and ideas as part of the process. The Ag Summit web site can be found at <**www.agsummit.gov.ab.ca**>. Albertans can also participate through the mail by calling (780) 422-1799 (reach this number toll-free by first dialing 310-0000) and asking for a workbook to be sent out.

Regular updates on the Summit process and the results of the meetings will be made available on the web site.

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Ag Summit 2000
Dates & Locations for Regional Meetings

(10:30 am – 3:00 pm in all locations)

Date	Location	Facility	Alberta Agriculture District Office Contact
April 4	**Drumheller**	The Falcon	Diane Luke – (403) 823-1675
April 5	**Claresholm**	Claresholm Community Hall	Paula Johnson – (403) 625-1445
April 6	**Taber**	Heritage Inn	Lynn Taylor – (403) 223-7907
April 7	**Olds**	Royal Canadian Legion #105	Shelly McLaren, Pat Spenst – (403) 556-4220
April 10	**Stettler**	Stettler Agricultural Society Pavilion	Debbie Heidt – (403) 742-7500
April 12	**Wetaskiwin**	Wetaskiwin Wayside Inn	Jodi Johnson – (780) 361-1240
April 13	**Glendon**	Glendon RCMP Hall	Sharon Boorse – (780) 645-6301
April 14	**Vermilion**	Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 11	Patti Breland – (780) 853-8101
April 17	**Westlock**	Westlock & District Community Hall	Darleen Lynes – (780) 349-4465
April 18	**Grande Prairie**	Grande Prairie Inn	Pat MacAlister – (780) 538-5285
April 19	**Peace River**	Traveller's Hotel	Simone Skirlik – (780) 624-6116
April 20	**Valleyview**	Valleyview Memorial Hall	Pat Breland – (780) 524-3301

Alberta Government numbers are toll free by dialling 310-0000 first.

Contact: *Brian Heidecker, or Charlie Mayer*
Co-chairs
Ag Summit 2000
(780) 427-4917

Janice Harrington
Communications
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(780) 422-7683

Veggies as an alternative crop?

The current financial squeeze many farmers across the prairies are facing has resulted in a renewed search for alternative crop production on the farm where higher returns are possible. Vegetable production in Alberta has attracted some of this attention, however, some of this renewed interest is founded on some serious misconceptions and perhaps desperation.

"In order to succeed in the production of vegetables, marketing becomes a major issue that has to be dealt with first," says Paul Ragan, vegetable specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South (CDCS), Brooks. "The history of vegetable production in Alberta is dotted with stories of both successes and failures in grower-organized cooperatives or other organizations that have been designed to aid the producer in marketing farm produce."

At the simplest and least capital intensive level, market gardening has perhaps had the most growth in recent years. The Alberta Market Gardeners Association (AMGA) is a group that deals with marketing and production issues through grower representation. The growth in major urban centres along with the consumers' desire to have a closer connection with the producer has made activity at farmers' markets a growing sector of this industry. The idea that produce at farmers' markets is fresher and locally grown has spurred interest in market gardening. The capital required to enter this sector of the industry is low and many farmers in Alberta use market gardening as an income supplement to the regular farming enterprise.

"The next stage in the industry is the commercial sector that includes crops grown for processing and the fresh wholesale market," says Ragan. "With processing crops, the Alberta Vegetable Growers (Processing) organization represents producers who grow vegetables for processing under the protection of a contract with a processing company. It's these contracts, much like a Canadian Wheat Board permit, that assures a market outlet for the vegetable crop. Carrots, sweet corn and peas are the major crops contracted with processors in the Taber area."

From a producers point of view, a processing crop contract becomes a valuable asset of the farm. The processor provides the seed and technical production knowledge along with a crew of men and equipment to harvest the crop. Currently, Alberta has a shortage of processing capacity, and that severely limits expansion of this sector.

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On the other hand, fresh wholesale sector continues to be the most challenging sector. This is largely because it lack a grower organization to provide marketing support. Many grower groups have come and gone over the years.

There is a strong independent attitude in the commercial fresh market sector also. Often other producers are viewed as competitors in the marketplace making cooperation for the benefit of all members difficult.

The commercial fresh market sector must also contend with low wholesale prices ruled by imports where high volume is profitable and value added processing is seen as one of few opportunities to increase farm revenue. For a small producer looking at the fresh wholesale market, low volume and lack of supply continuity makes cooperative marketing the only way to access the marketplace. The large wholesale houses located in Calgary and Edmonton prefer to deal with experienced producers who can supply large volumes of several vegetables over many months. Capital intensive and high labor requirements add to the burden each producer must face alone in a marketplace dominated by the big players.

"Opportunities still exist at all levels of production and marketing," adds Ragan. "The market gardening sector is the easiest level to begin at, and many use this as the growth level before attempting to tackle the processing and fresh wholesale sectors.

"Experience in the growing and marketing fresh vegetables is challenging and takes a completely different mind-set from cereal production. Often one of the most difficult issues for new producers to deal with is to focus less on potential returns and more on the challenges of marketing. A prospective producer needs to possess the ability to market produce and be skilful in labor management."

Value added processing and niche markets will continue to provide unlimited growth potential for vegetable producers in the province. Both are capital intensive and require significant manual labor. Horizontal integration with existing producers is an untested area in Alberta, but it has proven to be very successful in other provinces. In this situation, the producer provides the raw product for a value added processor who already has a foothold in the market place. This is a business arrangement where both the producer and the processor can benefit.

For further information, contact your local Alberta Agriculture's district crop specialists.

Contact: Paul Ragan
(403) 362-1310

Manure Application in Direct Seeding Systems

Incorporating manure isn't practical for direct seeding systems. Producers who use direct seeding and also have a cow-calf operation, questioned how they could apply manure without disturbing the soil. The Cropmasters Crop Club and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development initiated a project in 1998 to address this problem

"The objectives of the project are to demonstrate the ability to apply manure from cow-calf operations onto direct seeded land without incorporation," explains Kevin Yaremchuk, conservation technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Vegreville "We're focusing primarily on an even manure application without incorporation and the potential for interference with the seedbed, potential problems with germination and any changes in the weed spectrum."

At each of the project's five sites, a 10-acre parcel was chosen for manure application. The project team used GPS to select three benchmark soil sampling sites in each 10-acre parcel and three sites on adjacent land without manure application, for comparison.

The manure was applied at each site following the cooperator's normal practices, either raw or composted manure, at regular rates. "We used a custom applicator at all the sites, and tried to measure the application rate at each site," says Yaremchuk. "Initial rates are at levels producers think are acceptable. As the project progresses, these levels will be assessed as acceptable, high or low. We're working with custom applicators towards setting application rates according to plant uptake."

Cropmasters president, Larry Kitz of Two Hills is one of the cooperators in the project. He says, "We're using composted manure and feel it provides really big benefits. By composting, we reduce the volume in half, which makes a big difference to our custom hauling bill." Composted manure is very peaty and pliable with no lumps, making it very easy for spreading and for the seed drill to pass through. It can also be applied in fall or spring; there's no waiting for it to break down because it's already been broken down by the composting process.

"It's too early to see any real agronomic benefits yet, but we are expecting benefits in soil tilth and fertility, especially for phosphate and potash," adds Kitz. "We also expected a big inconvenience with trying to compost the manure and having to turn over the piles, but it just wasn't there. It really only took about a half day."

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At the end of the season, Kitz cleans out the pens and piles the manure in windrows, which are turned over once after 45 days or two months during the summer with a tractor and front-end loader. He hired a custom contractor to haul out all the compost, and his hauling bill dropping from about $9000 to $4500 in comparison to raw manure.

"I believe there are long-term benefits to this practice, especially using composted manure," says Kitz.

"Although it's too early in the project to draw any trends or conclusions, this practice appears to be working very well," says Yaremchuk. "So far, all the cooperators have applied the manure in the fall, with no other operations until direct seeding in the spring. In one case, it appears that the raw manure application may be tying up some of the nitrogen in the first year, dropping the amount of available nitrogen for the crop.

"Overall we feel that direct application of manure without incorporation is definitely a practice to consider for the future. It is really an emerging technology that should have a good fit in direct seeding systems."

This is the last year of the project, wrap up will be in the fall of 2000. The project received funding from the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) Farm Based Program.

Contact:	*Kevin Yaremchuk* *(780) 632-5467*	*Larry Kitz* *(780) 592-2200*

Better Options to Reduce Dust Emissions from Alfalfa Dehydration Plants

A concern about the quality of life for people living near its member plants prompted the Alberta Dehydrators Association (ADA) to study options to reduce dust emissions from alfalfa processing. Results of this research helped identify ways to meet Alberta's exacting provincial emission standards.

"The drying, milling, pelletizing and cooling processes in a dehydration plant all create dust made up of small particles of alfalfa," says Dave Ritchie, industry development officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton, responsible for the processing based component of the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) Agreement. "Most of the dust is generated at the hammer mill stage. One of the methods used to reduce this dust is 'cyclones' that are used at various stages to remove dust from the airflow before the air is discharged into the atmosphere."

In 1997, with funding from the AESA Processing Based Program, the ADA initiated a three-phase project to enhance dust removal. The first phase focused on the design, fabrication and testing of a cyclone installed in series with a plant's existing hammer mill cyclone. "This new cyclone significantly improves the quality of the effluent discharged to the atmosphere, and will reduce emissions sufficiently to meet the required standards," explains Ritchie.

The project's second phase assessed the effect of the length of the inner tube in high efficiency cyclones on dust emissions. "The results of a previous ADA project indicated that particulate emission from a cyclone using an inner tube of 54 inches was lower than emissions using a conventional 30-inch inner tube," says Ritchie. "Based on those results, the ADA designed an adjustable inner tube to assess whether further reductions in emissions could be achieved by varying the length of the inner tube. Unfortunately that was not the case."

The third phase looked at recirculating a portion of air exhaust from the hammer mill cyclone to the hammer mill, and channelling the remaining exhaust through the dryer cyclone. This phase assessed the percentage of air exhaust to be returned to the hammer mill; heat buildup in the hammer mill cyclone during summer months as a result of the re-circulation; and, the effect of fines on the dryer performance.

"Based on the effluent emission regulation specified by Alberta Environment, it is apparent that recirculating a portion of the airflow from the hammer mill cyclone to the hammer mill and the dryer cyclone could be a technically feasible solution in reducing the particulate emission levels of dehydrating plants," adds Ritchie. "The airflow will have to be properly balanced for a continuous undisturbed operation of the hammer mill."

This option is only recommended if the dryer cyclone is emitting less dust than the limits set by Alberta Environment, so it can handle additional dust from the hammer mill exhaust.

For its research in this area of dust emission reduction and its environmental commitment, the ADA received a Green Team Award. The ADA was one of two innovative Alberta processors to be inducted into the Green Team of the Agriculture and Food Industry in 1999. Growing Alberta and its sponsors host these inductions each October, during Agriculture and Food Week. Producers, processors and retailers are nominated for induction by their peers for their long-term commitment to environmental stewardship.

Contact: *Dave Ritchie*
(780) 422-2556

Alberta farmers, still working long hours

Today, most Alberta farms use the latest technology and management tools. Many Alberta farms are capital-intensive and large commercial operations with a high degree of specialization.

Based on the 1996 Census, farmers can be grouped into two main categories: **primary farm operators** – those with farming as their principal occupation; **other farm operators** – those without farming as their principal occupation. Statistics combining the two categories are also provided.

"According to Statistics Canada data, Alberta farmers still work more days and longer hours, when compared to the general labor force," says Chuanliang Su, farm structure statistician with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "In 1995, farm operators worked an average of 46 weeks, compared to 42 weeks for the general labor force. For the week prior to May 14, 1996 (census day), farmers worked an average of 46 hours, compared to 35 hours for the general labor force. Primary farm operators worked even more, 47 weeks in 1995, and 50 hours for the week prior to May 14, 1996. Other farm operators worked 44 weeks in 1995, and 41 hours for the week prior to census day."

Compared to the general labor force, Alberta farmers are older. In 1996, the average age was 48 for farm operators, 38 for the general labor force in Alberta. Primary farm operators reported average age at 51.

"In general, primary farm operators have larger farms and generate more gross sales than other farm operators," continues Su. "In 1996, total farm area averaged 1,208 acres for primary farm operators, more than double the 485 acre average for other farmers. Primary farm operators reported average farm gross sales at $191,300, more than triple the $59,074 for other farmers. The average farm capital was $910,644 for primary farm operators, compared to $442,467 for other farm operators."

In 1996, there were 83,125 farm operators, representing 3.1 per cent of the total population in Alberta. These farmers operate 59,007 farms in Alberta, according to the 1996 Census of Agriculture.

Farm Operators and Total Labor Force Classified by Work Activity: Alberta, 1996

	Total number	Average age	# weeks worked in 1995	Average hours per week*
Primary farm operators	48,095	51	47	50
Other farm operators	35,030	44	44	41
All farm operators	**83,125**	**48**	**46**	**46**
General labor force	1,486,980	38	42	35

* Number of hours worked in the week prior to May 14, 1996

Farm Operators Classified by Selected Agriculture Variables: Alberta, 1996

	Total operators	Average farm size (acres)	Average gross farm receipts	Average farm capital
Primary farm operators	48,095	1,208	191,300	910,644
Other farm operators	35,030	485	59,074	442,467
All farm operators	**83,125**	**903**	**135,576**	**713,342**

- Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Ag-pop linkage data base
- Prepared by: Statistics and Data Development Unit, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

Contact: *Chuanliang Su*
(780) 422-2887

Calving time management

Many cow-calf producers are anticipating the arrival of spring born calves. It's become a ritual with many operators to feed the cow herd right, provide the timely vaccinations and perhaps be around when the cows start to calf. Proper nutrition and disease prevention in the cow herd is a lot cheaper than treating newborn calves later for diseases like scours.

"There's probably several key points to remember when feeding pre-calving and post-calving cows," says Bill Grabowsky, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Wetaskiwin. "Pregnant and lactating cows should be fed better quality feeds and, probably, fed more of them. The quality and quantity will be expressed in the cow's colostrum. It is important to get about 1.5 to 2 litres of colostrum into the calf in the first four to six hours after birthing, to produce the good quality colostrum in the needed quantity, the cow needs to be in good body condition."

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Another important factor that contributes to a successful calving program is having clean ground for the cows to calve-out on. "Don't calve-out the cow herd on the wintering / feeding grounds," advises Grabowsky. "Disease causing bugs are spread by the manure and young calves are very susceptible to them. Also, plan to use lots of bedding, especially during bad weather. If the weather is really harsh, calf shelters may be needed. It's been said more than once by leading experts, that the calving cow herd needs space and lots of it! Overcrowding of the herd causes stress and this can lead to scours."

Calving time management means different things to different cow herd operations. The main goal producers are working toward is getting live calves. Many factors contribute to getting live calves, including: timely cow nutrition, proper bull selection, wintering and calving ground separation, proper sanitation at calving time and adopting preventative disease management practices.

Contact: *Bill Grabowsky*
(780) 361-1240

AgVenture workshops

If the interest in the AgVenture workshops throughout rural Alberta is an indication, then many Alberta farmers are thinking about making some changes.

"Workshops dealing with topics such as alternative livestock, organic production, agri-tourism and direct marketing are attracting lots of participants," says Jean Wilson, business development advisor with the Agricultural Business Management Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "At almost all of the workshops, the one message that speakers emphasize is the importance of good information."

Many ideas are discussed and presented at these workshops. Some of the ideas that have been shared include:

- Talk to others who are already in business. If you don't know anyone involved in the enterprise, locate the provincial or national groups involved and get a list of local contacts. If possible, talk to people who have tried and failed. We often learn more from failure than from success.
- Read all you can about your proposed enterprise. Farm media, such as producer and processor magazines and newspapers, commonly pick up on new trends in feature articles. The Internet also offers a rapid means of accessing information on new topic areas. Several Alberta Agriculture offices have resource centres that offer internet access.
- Study the markets. Get a good sense of market trends for any crop or product you are considering. It's important to know which wholesalers, retailers, or brokers handle the product; and, whether or not direct marketing an option? A good source of pertinent information is other producers, find out how they market.
- Establish your market connections before you grow your crop. This is especially important for niche market products such as medicinal herbs.
- Be flexible. It's often necessary to move quickly in response to rapidly changing market conditions. Be ready to innovate.
- Think holistically. Consider more than just immediate, short-term profits when investigating new crops and enterprises. Diversification may not actually increase profits. What it can do is make profitability more reliable by smoothing out the ride between good and bad years.

"If you're interested in diversification ideas related to organic production or direct marketing, several workshops are scheduled for March," adds Wilson.

Workshop topics and dates include:

Organics

• March 16	Olds contact Jackie Anderson	(403) 843-2201
• March 22	Hanna contact Jackie Anderson	(403) 843-2201

Direct Marketing

• March 15	Morinville contact Janice McGregor	(780) 939-4351
• March 16	Camrose contact Marian Williams	(780) 679-1210
• March 28	Medicine Hat contact Linda Hawk	(403) 529-3616

Contact: *Jean Wilson*
(780) 415-2146

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Distilling essential oils

An introductory workshop, ***Distilling Essential Oils*** is being held on March 19, 2000 at the Riverdale Hall in Edmonton. The workshop, sponsored by the Flower and Herb Growers Association of Alberta (FHGAA), will address topics such as: portable distilling unit pilot project; small and large scale distilling; wildcrafting for distilling; and, aromatherapy concerns for distillers. The workshop will features displays of Distillers and some products. Registration costs $20 for FHGAA members and $30 for non-members. Cheques should be made payable to the FHGAA. To register, send your name and fees to Box 5013, Edson, AB T7E 1T3. For further information, contact Heather Kehr at (780) 795-2649.

Seedy Saturday Event 2000

Seedy Saturday has become an annual event that brings backyard gardeners, seed savers, community gardeners and many other people who love plants, together with regional seed companies that produce open-pollinated varieties of vegetables, cereals, fruits, herbs and native perennials. The Flower and Herb Growers Association of Alberta, the Ukrainian Heritage Cultural Village, the Northgate Senior's Garden Club and Seeds of Diversity, Canada are organizing Edmonton's sixth annual Seedy Saturday. Anyone concerned about diversity in the environment and preserving endangered species are welcome to participate by sharing or trading seed. This is an opportunity to source open-pollinated seed stocks of every description from growers across western Canada. The event will be held at the Northgate Lion's Senior Centre in Edmonton on March 25, 2000. Admission is $2 per person.

4-H livestock sales schedule for 2000

Springtime means achievement days and livestock sales for Alberta 4-H'ers. All year members work on their projects. They learn about livestock production management through the experience of owning, caring for and maintaining records on their beef cattle, sheep, swine, bison or even ducks. 4-H'ers are known for their humane production of top quality animals Alberta 4-H Livestock Club Sales promotion information, the times and events where 4-H'ers get to showcase their talents is available on the 4-H website <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/ruraldev/4h/clubsales2000.html**>. Further information is also available by contacting one of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's regional 4-H specialists:
Milo Barfuss, Lethbridge (403) 381-5815;
Janet Kerr, Stettler (403) 742-7547;
Jocelyn McKinnon, Barrhead (780) 674-8250;
Stacy Murray, Fairview (780) 835-2241; or by contacting Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist, (780) 422 4H4H (4444).

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Agri-News

March 20, 2000

Premier announces immediate support for Alberta farmers

A one-time agricultural assistance package totaling $145 million in new provincial funding will assist Alberta farmers. Premier Ralph Klein and Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, made the announcement on March 14, 2000.

"This one-time payment is in response to the high cost of shipping grain to port, rising input costs, low commodity prices and adverse weather conditions facing our producers," says Premier Klein. "It also shows Alberta's commitment to address the unfairness practiced by Ottawa when they excluded our farmers from their recent assistance package."

The immediate support package will have the following components:

- The new Alberta Farm Income Assistance Program 2000 (AFIAP) will pay $4.29 of provincial funds per acre for all arable acres. All Alberta producers who were actively and directly farming as of December 31, 1999 will be eligible. AFIAP is expected to cost $121.4 million.
- The province will provide a credit to all producers purchasing all-risk crop insurance for the 2000 crop year. This measure will cost approximately $20 million and will result in a premium reduction of 30 per cent of each producer's premium, regardless of the coverage level chosen.
- In anticipation of low livestock water supply and storage, the province will invest $2.0 million to increase provincial water pumping capabilities by approximately one-third.
- In response to producer suggestions with respect to the Farm Income Disaster Program (FIDP), the $50 application fee and 1% administrative charge on successful applications will be removed. The elimination of the FIDP fees will be retroactive to include all 1999 claims, saving applicants approximately $1.6 million annually.
- Under AFIAP, a 1500-acre farm will receive $6435 in one-time provincial assistance plus crop insurance credits for the 2000 crop year.

"This assistance will be distributed quickly. As farmers apply, we will issue cheques with the shortest possible turn-around time," says Lund. "It is our aim to have most of the assistance distributed in time for spring work. To help us do that, I would encourage farmers to apply as soon as possible."

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Premier Klein sent a letter to the Prime Minister to follow up on Lund's meetings in Ottawa on March 1, 2000. The Premier demanded that Ottawa include Alberta in its assistance program by cost sharing AFIAP on a 60 per cent basis, as is customary for Canadian agricultural assistance programs.

Based on an examination of the funding announced for Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the province calculates that approximately $103 million in federal funding would represent a fair federal contribution to Alberta producers. The Premier committed that any federal cost-share funds received will be distributed to producers in addition to the provincial program announced today.

"Ottawa needs to step up to the plate and demonstrate fairness," says Lund. "As soon as they do, Alberta farmers will receive this additional assistance based on their provincial application."

AFIAP application forms will be mailed to all producers this week. They will also be available at all Alberta Agriculture field offices and in printable form on the department's web site at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca>**.

With the combination of the enhancements to the Farm Income Disaster Program announced in October 1999 and today's new funding, the Alberta government has committed more than $300 million in new or enhanced programs for Alberta farmers this fiscal year.

Contact:

Fay Orr
Office of the Premier
(780) 422-4905

Michael Lohner
Office of the Minister,
Alberta Agriculture
(780) 427-2137

Ken Moholitny
Program Services
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(780) 427-3078

Additional information on the New AFIAP 2000

The Alberta government introduced this one-time payment to help Alberta farmers offset falling income resulting from the combination of low commodity prices, increases in rail freight costs, higher fertilizer costs and adverse weather conditions.

The Alberta Farm Income Assistance Program (AFIAP) will provide an estimated $121.4 million as a one-time provincial payment. To ensure that the money flows to farmers quickly, a per acre payment of $4.29 will be made for all arable acres. Native pasture and land covered under the Permanent Cover Program is not eligible. An acreage payment is the quickest way to distribute funds to eligible farmers.

Farmers will be required to complete a one-page application with information on seeded acreage in 1999. Only applications with acreage not verifiable through CWB Permit Books will require the signature of a Commissioner for Oaths.

The application deadline is May 31, 2000. Farmers should receive payments within 4 weeks of applying. It is expected that the majority of payments will be made before spring seeding.

Application forms will be mailed to farmers within a week. Additional application forms will also be available in Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development field offices and on the Internet at: **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/fiap/>**.

For more information, call Program Services Division, Alberta Agriculture, (780) 422-9167. Call this number toll free by first dialing 310-0000.

2000 All Risk Crop Insurance Premium Reduction

All risk crop insurance is an important risk management tool for farmers. To assist farmers with their production risk management strategies, the Alberta government is reducing the farmer share of premiums by 30 per cent for the 2000 crop year.

The estimated cost for this initiative is approximately $20 million and will be funded from interest earnings in the Crop Fund for Alberta.

For an average (index 1) farmer insuring 1000 acres of wheat at a 70 per cent coverage level, savings range from $412 to $1613 depending on price option selected and the risk area.

For more information call AFSC, Lacombe, (403) 782-8200, toll-free by first dialing 310-0000.

Elimination of FIDP Application and Administration Fees

Currently, farmers pay a $50 application fee to file a FIDP application. As well, farmers are charged a 1 per cent administration fee on payments made under the program to a maximum of $450.

Effective for 1999 and subsequent farm tax years, Alberta farmers will not be charged the application or administration fee under the program. Farmers who have already filed 1999 tax year claims will be reimbursed for any fees collected to date.

This change is expected to save 1999 applicants approximately $1.6 million.

For more information, contact AFSC, Lacombe, at: 1-800-851-5070.

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Enhancements to AAFRD's Dugout Pumping Program

Many parts of the province have experienced a number of years of extremely dry weather conditions. Continuous drought conditions have had a negative impact on water supplies and storage systems for livestock producers.

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development currently maintains an inventory of 6 and 8 inch pipe and water pumps that are available for rent by farmers who need to fill depleted dugouts used for domestic and livestock purposes. While dugout pumping inventory is located throughout the province, excessive drought conditions in parts of the province have resulted in waiting lists and, at times, taxed the availability of equipment to allow dugout pumping on a timely basis.

To ensure that farmers have access to necessary equipment to meet their water supply needs, the Alberta government is investing approximately $2 million for additional pumps, pipe and trailers to meet increased demands for filling farm dugouts. Pumping capacity will be increased by approximately one-third.

For more information, contact the Engineering Services Branch, Lethbridge, at (403) 329-1212, toll-free by first dialing 310-0000.

Commitment to Agriculture

With the new initiatives announced today and the enhancements to the Farm Income Disaster Program last fall, the Alberta government is committing in excess of $300 million through new or enhanced programs this fiscal year.

Industry-driven, pro-active agricultural safety and health policies unveiled

The official launch of a new safety and health program for two feedlots in Alberta, is a win-win situation for the feedlot industry, its workers and visitors and for other agricultural industries.

On February 26, 2000, the first-ever agreements for Agricultural Safety and Health Policies in Alberta were signed by the owners of Highland Feeders and Cattleland Feedyards and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The commitment to this program demonstrates pro-active leadership in a non-regulated industry and will lead the way for similar safety and health programs to be extended and developed by Alberta Agriculture for other agriculture industries.

The program has been a cooperative effort from the start. Highland Feeders worked with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Farm Safety Division to customize and implement farm safety and health programs that would address the unique needs of their feedlot and 34 employees. Most of the feedlots' staff have already completed courses in first aid, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and fire safety. About a third of the staff, including supervisors, are enrolled in Alberta Agriculture's Green Certificate Program and have completed Level One

"Initially, we were looking for a first aid program and wanted to establish a baseline for training," said Highland's Page Stuart "We talked to Alberta Agriculture and they suggested that we work together to develop a detailed but practical safety program. The more we investigated the more we realized there wasn't really an industry standard and we knew Alberta Agriculture could help us develop a model that could be applied to our industry."

At the same time Highland was working with Alberta Agriculture to develop the model, Cattleland Feedyards, in southern Alberta, was looking for a similar program.

"We have 35 staff and we wanted a better level of preparedness," said Norm Kuntz of Cattleland. "For the most part it was for health-related reasons, knowing what to do in an emergency. We saw that we could learn from Highland's example."

Kuntz says, "Setting up a safety and health program as a pro-active thing to do, regardless of the size of your operation; to identify potential problems and be prepared to deal with them." Those preparations include such things as good management of materials on site, fire preparedness, first aid kits and eye wash stations.

The model is available for other producers in the feedlot industry. In the meantime, Alberta Agriculture is busy working on another model to be applied in the crop sector. From their perspective, one farm safety accident is one too many and they are more determined than ever that farm safety be priority number one with producers and their workers.

Contact: *Eric Jones*
Farm Safety Division, Alberta Agriculture
(780) 427-4231

Market opportunities for new crops

A new window of opportunity may just require a change in perspective. Grain and traditional crop producers in the Peace area are facing uncertain markets, falling prices and rising input and distribution costs. So, they're turning their gaze 90 degrees to view the northern agriculture industry from a different perspective.

"What Peace producers are seeing is an opportunity to diversify and pursue value added ventures from a market rather than strictly production focus," says Karen Goad,

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agrifood specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Grande Prairie. "They're hearing lots about the new, niche crops – herbs, spices, medicinals and herbals, but they lack Peace-specific crop suitability, production and market information."

It's important that producers interested in diversifying do the market research before they buy the first trial seed. Key questions to consider up-front are:

- Who buys the product? Where are they located?
- What are they buying?
- When, where and in what form are the buyers buying?
- What are the market prices? How much do they fluctuate?
- What is the market size? Is the market mature or growing? Is there room for additional production?

"Market Opportunities for New Crops, is a one-day workshop being offered by Alberta Agriculture that will help answer some of these questions and provide information on production techniques for some of the new crops suited to the Peace," adds Goad. "It's targeted to agriculture innovators who recognize that new crop markets are small and volatile but offer the potential for significant returns."

The workshop gives participants a chance to talk to some of the industry's growers, processors and buyers. Two Peace Country producers, Wayne Alde of the Grande Prairie area, and Stephen Petluk of Nampa, will share their experiences growing, harvesting and marketing hemp and caraway. The third grower panel participant, Jim Marles of Morinville, will share his experiences producing over 11 acres of various medicinal herbs and operating a commercial greenhouse, *West Country Herbs*.

"A processor/buyer panel will provide information on the crop varieties the buyers are looking for as well as details on the crop quality and quantities needed and any processing requirements," adds Goad. "The panel features three well known industry buyers: Joel Thuna, Rick DeSylva and Trace Johnston."

Thuna is the general manager of *Global Botanical* of Barrie, Ontario, a major new crop buyer and herbal product manufacturer and distributor. DeSylva, of Guelph Ontario, manufactures a broad spectrum of herbal formulations in his business, *The Herb Works*. Johnston is the founder and part-owner of *Bedrock Seed Bank*, an Alberta company specializing in the propagation of native grass and forb seeds and the marketing of new crops and spices.

A founding member of the *Innisfail Growers Co-operative*, Leona Staples will share her experience in a successful new market development venture that brought their specialty horticulture crops into 23 Alberta Farmers' Markets, provincial wholesalers and restaurants.

The program will be offered in five locations in the Peace. Call the location nearest you for registration information.

Registration deadline is March 27, 2000.

- **Falher** Knights of Columbus Hall
  April 5 (780) 837-2211*
- **Blumenort** Hillcrest School
  April 6 (780) 927-3712*
- **Manning** Battle River Ag Society Hall
  April 7 (780) 836-3351*
- **Hines Creek** Dave Shaw Memorial Complex
  April 7 (780) 685-3925
- **Grande Prairie** Golden Inn
  April 8 (780) 538-5285*

* Alberta government numbers are toll free by dialling 310-0000 first.

Contact: Karen Goad
(780) 538-5285

Intensive livestock operations web site

As an industry grows, issues arise and the intensive livestock industry is no exception.

"Providing information to producers, municipalities, government and rural communities on the intensive livestock industry is essential," says Suzanne Randall, information advisor with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Red Deer. "Information about environmentally sound and socially acceptable development of the livestock industry in Alberta is now accessible to everyone through the Intensive Livestock Operations (ILO) website."

Intensive livestock operations information makes up one of the sections on Alberta Agriculture's internet site. The address is: <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/navigation/livestock/ilo/index.html**>.

The ILO site includes information on:

- the ***Technical Services Division*** – the branches and staff available to assist you;
- ***Acts and Regulations*** – concerning intensive livestock operations and the livestock industry in Alberta;
- ***Environmental Sustainability*** – highlights funding programs, research projects and environmental risk assessment information relating to intensive livestock operations;
- ***Industry Expansion and Development*** – information and resources on planning, site development, communication issues, water quality, socio-economic issues and nutrient management;
- ***Facilities*** – buildings, equipment, feeding and handling

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facilities relating to the development of intensive livestock operations;

- ***Newsletters*** – links to newsletters on related topics;
- ***Links*** – to other web sites on related topics; and
- ***Resources Available*** – how they can be accessed.

Information on this site will be updated and new information added on a regular basis.

Contact: Suzanne Randall
(403) 340-5339

Grasses for pasture

For Albertans seeding pasture this year, it will soon be time to decide on what type of grasses to include in pasture mixes. Before selecting pasture species, a few factors should be considered. These include the productive potential, the persistence and longevity, the competitiveness of the species and the type of soil conditions including the possibility of flooding or extremely dry conditions.

"One of the more productive grasses used for pastures continues to be meadow bromegrass," says Harvey Yoder, forage crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lac La Biche. "Meadow bromegrass has a bunch-type growth habit similar to timothy. Meadow bromegrass has many basal leaves and provides rapid recovery after grazing when compared to most of the other grasses. It is adapted to the cooler, moist areas, but won't withstand flooding for more than three to four days."

Meadow bromegrass stands have persisted for 10 years or longer, but it is not as persistent as smooth bromegrass and it won't creep and fill to the same extent as smooth bromegrass.

"Meadow bromegrass provides earlier spring growth when compared to most other grasses," adds Yoder. "Three varieties of meadow bromegrass are available, including: Regar, Paddock and Fleet. There is very little difference in dry matter production between these three varieties."

Seeding rates of meadow bromegrass should be somewhat higher when compared to other species. Meadow bromegrass has approximately 80,000 seeds per pound compared to timothy which has approximately a million seeds per pound. Meadow bromegrass has a short awn on the seed which causes bridging problems in most seeding equipment. The use of coated seed or mixing meadow bromegrass with other material that does not bridge will help the bridging problems.

"Smooth bromegrass has wide adaptation and continues to be used for pasture production," says Yoder. "Smooth bromegrass with it's strong creeping habit of growth, similar to quackgrass, is very competitive and can crowd out other species used in pasture mixtures. It is extremely winter hardy and is nearly as productive as meadow bromegrass under a grazing situation

Orchard grass, which adapts well to well drained soil conditions, can be used in short term pastures. Orchard grass has the ability to re-seed itself providing opportunity is given for seed development. Individual plants of orchard grass are not as persistent as most other grasses

Crested wheatgrass is being used in lighter sandy soils and areas experiencing drought. Crested wheatgrass has early spring growth and will send out seed heads earlier than most other grasses. Early spring grazing is required to prevent heading, otherwise cattle will ignore the headed plants and other species in the mixture will be grazed. In most cases, crested wheatgrass should not be used in mixtures with other grasses.

"Timothy can be used for pasture purposes particularly in fields with drainage problems," continues Yoder. "The regrowth on timothy is not as good as other grass species. Meadow foxtail can also be used in areas where flooding occurs. Again meadow foxtail is one of the earlier growing grasses, but does require good grazing management to keep it in a vegetative form. Meadow foxtail has a very light fluffy seed head and has the ability to re-seed itself."

Tall fescue is a very productive grass, but is slow to start in the spring and is not nearly as persistent as other grasses. It should only be considered in a short term pasture.

"Kentucky bluegrass and creeping red fescue are very winter hardy and are productive in high precipitation areas," says Yoder. "However, in most cases, the production is 60 to 70 per cent of other cultivated grasses. Because of their low growing habit, they will persist under a continuous grazing situation. Both are very competitive and will have a tendency to crowd out other species in the mixture."

Legumes such as alfalfas and clovers should be considered in pasture mixtures. There is always the possibility of bloat. However, bloat problems can be greatly reduced if the legume content is 30 to 40 per cent or less of the mixture."

Contact: Harvey Yoder
(780) 623-5218

Agri-News Briefs

Market opportunities for new crops

A one-day seminar aimed at rural producers in the Peace region is scheduled in five locations in early April, 2000. The seminar, ***Market Opportunities for New Crops*** is an opportunity for interested rural producers to learn about producing new crops such as herbs, spices, medicinal plants and native grasses. Topics being covered also include: non-traditional marketing options; strategies to access new markets; niche crop production and marketing techniques; expand industry networks; and increase potential market returns through crop diversification. The seminar will be offered:

Date	*Location*	*Contact for further information*
• April 5	Falher	(780) 837-2211
• April 6	Blumenort	(780) 927-3712
• April 7	Manning	(780) 836-3351
• April 7	Hines Creek	(780) 685-3925
• April 8	Grande Prairie	(780) 538-5285

Riparian area seminar

Riparian area is the term used to describe the land bordering creeks, streams, rivers and lakes. Sound management of this lush and very productive land is essential to keep Alberta's riparian areas healthy. ***Cows & Creeks ... are there really problems?*** is the theme of a one-day seminar being sponsored by Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Cattle Commission, M.D. #99 Ag. Service Board, Rocky Ag. Society; Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Program and Trout Unlimited. Presentations include: How Creeks Work - Recognizing a Healthy Creek from a Suffering Creek; and, Water Quality - What's the Difference. Panel presentations round out the day, covering topics such as: a cattleman's perspective; the North Raven - a winning partnership; ranching by the creek - a year-round issue; and cattle wintering sites - a win-win solution. For further information or to register for the seminar, contact Kim Nielsen, chairman of the Rocky Riparian Working Group (403) 845-4444, Rocky Mountain House; Christine Sweet, conservation technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lacombe, (403) 782-3301; or Ken Ziegler, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Rocky Mountain House, (403) 845-8200.

Nutrition and management in the swine industry

A two-day seminar on ***Breeding Herd Nutrition and Management*** is being offered as one of the seminars planned in management training for the swine industry. The course will assist the participants in understanding the reproductive process of gilts and sow and how this process is affected by a host of factors such as genetics, disease, nutrition and management. Participants will plan a nutritional, breeding and management program that will allow gilts and sows to express their genetic potential for early onset of puberty, high ovulation rate, high embryo survival, large litter size born and weaned and the optimal lifetime output of good quality pigs. The seminar is being held at Olds College on March 21 and 22, 2000. Cost of the seminar is $280 per person (plus GST). For more information, contact Michelle Follensbee at (780) 415-0828, e-mail <**michelle.follensbee@agric.gov.ab.ca**>. For further information or to register, contact Mary Metersen, coordinator of training programs, Prairie Swine Centre Inc. (306) 477-1674 or Olds College, 1-800-661-6537, (403) 556-4684 in the Olds area.

Coming Agricultural Events

March

Grain Marketing
March 20 - April 3
Agricore
Two Hills
Fee: $30.00
Contact: Vermilion District Office (780) 853-8101

Manure Management Workshop
March 20 - 21
Picture Butte Community Centre
Picture Butte
Fee: $125.00
Contact: Troy Ormann (403) 381-5108

Conference on Management Issues in Agricultural GIS
March 21 - 23
Coast Terrace Inn
Edmonton
Fee: $125 per person
Contact: Leon Marciak (780) 427-3689

Healthy Landscapes, Healthy Water
March 21 - 23
Room #101 - 2022 Cornwall Street
Regina, Sask.
Fee: $150.00 (before February 1st)
Spousal Fee $50.00, Display $250.00
Contact: Johanna Jacks (306) 787-1786

Management Training for the Swine Industry: Stockmanship/ Behaviour
March 21 - 22
Olds College
Olds
Fee: $280
Contact: Olds College 1-800-661-6537 or (403) 556-4711

Pests 2000 – Crop Insect and Disease update
March 21
Lloydminster fair grounds
Lloydminster
Contact: Provost AAFRD Office (780) 753-6871

Northlands 17th Annual Pedigreed Seed Show
March 22 - 25
Northlands Park
Edmonton
Contact: Northlands Park (780) 471-7260

Northlands Farm and Ranch Show 2000
March 22 - 25
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton
Contact: Simon Rose 1-888-799-2545, Ext.561

Rainy Creek Conservation Club Workshop
March 22
Lacombe
Contact: Rick Taillieu (403)556-8235

E-Business for Agriculture It's Here Conference
March 23
Saskatoon Inn
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Contact: 1-888-789-5153
E-mail: infonet@aginfonet.com

North Peace Applied Research Association Annual Meeting
March 25
Hill Crest Community School
Bluemnort
Fee: 2000 Memberships for sale for $21.40 includes copy of 1999 Annual Report
Contact: (780) 927-3712

Future SIM Course
March 27 - 31
Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church
Barrhead, Alberta
Fee: $40
Contact: Bert Dening (780) 674-8247

Ins and Outs of Direct Marketing
March 28
Medicine Hat
Medicine Hat
Fee: $30/person or $50 two people from the same business
Contact: Linda Hawk (403) 529-3616

April

International Congress on Irrigation Systems Transfers
April 2 - 9
El Mega Cid
Mazatlan, Mexico
Contact: Mr. Luis A. Gomez Ugarte

QuickBooks (farm accounting)
April 3 - April 5
Provincial Building
Vegreville
Fee: $230
Contact: Betty Lyzaniuk (780) 632-5400

Setting Up for Winter Grazing
April 3
Lakedell Centre
Westerose
Contact: Bill Grabowsky (780) 361-1240

The Bull Session: Angus Bull and Female Sale
April 6
Nilsson Bros. Inc.
Clyde

Beginner Sheep Production Schools
April 8 - 9
Olds College
Olds
Contact: Olds College Extension Office
1-800-661-6537 ext. 8344

Canada Grains Council Annual Convention: An Industry in Change
April 9 - 11
Lombard Hotel
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Fee: $200
Contact: Victoria Watson (204) 942-2254

1st International Symposium on Antler Science and Product Technology
April 9 - 12
Eric Harvie Theater, Banff Centre
Banff
Contact: Dr. Robert Hudson, University of Alberta
(403)492-2111

Farm Women's Day – Spring Fling
April 12
Barrhead United Church
Barrhead
Fee: $15.00
Contact: Shirley Lynes (780) 674-8213

Horse Summit 2000
April 14 - 16
Keystone Centre
Brandon, MB
Contact: Norm Luba (502) 245-0425

Parelli Natural Horsemanship Level 2 Clinic
April 29 - 30, 2000
Stettler

May

Parelli Natural Horsemanship Level 2 Workshop
May 1
Stettler

XCELL Performance Horse Sale
May 5 - 6
Olds College Arena
Olds
Contact: (780) 968-1100

Wild Rose Draft Horse Association Annual All-Breed Draft Horse Sale
May 6
McDiarmid Auctions
Veteran
Contact: Tammy Muise (403) 256-8044

Alberta Women's Institutes
May 23 - 26
Olds College
Olds
Contact: Executive Director AWI (780) 488-5282

Aquaculture Canada 2000
May 28 - 31
Hotel Beausejour
Moncton, NB
Contact: Dr. Andrew Boghen (506) 858-4321

June

Gourmet Products Show
June 4 - 7
San Francisco, CA
Contact: (415) 344-5171

Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference
June 5 - 8
Sheraton Centre
Toronto, Ontario
Contact: Sharon Murray 1-877-925-2242

Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, Triennial Convention
June 6 - 11
Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium
Brandon, MB
Contact: Lynne Hopely (204) 728-1254

NFRBMEA National Conference
June 11 - 15
Enid, Oklahoma, USA

Associated Country Women of the World
June 11 - 18
Hamilton, ON
Contact: Mary Janes (519) 786-5069

Stockmen's Range Management Course
June 12 - 14
Range Camp Setting
Maycroft
Fee: $100/person, $160 for couples
Contact: Brenda Chmielewski (403) 381-5486

Pasture School (Western Forage/Beef Group)
June 13 - 15
Lacombe Research Centre
Lacombe
Contact: Cathy Hendrickson (403) 782-8030 or 1-800-340-9178

Stockmen's Range Management Course
June 19 - 21
Range Camp Setting
Elkwater
Fee: $100/person, $160 for couples
Contact: Brenda Chmielewski (403) 381-5486

Manure Management 2000
June 26 - 28
Coast Plaza Hotel
Calgary
Contact: Michelle Follensbee (780) 415-0828 or Darcy Fitzgerald (403) 340-4822

July

National Conference for the Advancement of Women in Engineering, Science & Technology
July 6 - 8
Battery Hotel & Suites
St. John's, Newfoundland
Contact: Carolyn J. Emerson (709) 737-7960

Calgary Stampede
July 7 - 16
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta

6th International Symposium on the Biosafety of Genetically Modified Organisms
July 8 - 13
Delta Bessborough Hotel
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Contact: Bill Anderson (306) 975-1939

Canadian Egg Marketing Agency
July 10 - 12
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Contact: (403) 250-1197

National Recirculating Aquaculture Workshop
July 13 - 15
Lethbridge
Contact: Cheryl Regier (403) 382-6991

The Third International Conference on Recirculating Aquaculture Systems
July 20 - 23
Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center
Roanoke, VA

65 Anniversary Open House CDCS
July 28
Crop Diversification Centre South
Brooks
Contact: Shelley Barkley (403) 362-1305

August

International Bison Conference
August 1 - 4
Mayfield Inn
Edmonton
Contact: Phil Staden (403)763-2107

World Poultry Conference
August 20 - 25
Palais Des Congres
Montreal, Quebec
Contact: Events International Meeting Planners
(514) 286-0855

September

The Fifth International Symposium on Tilapia in Aquaculture
September 3 - 5
Sofitel Rio Palace
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

CFWF 2000
September 28 - October 1
Lethbridge Lodge
Lethbridge
Contact: Janet Kanters (403) 901-1160

October

World Dairy Expo
October 4 - 8
Dane County Expo Center
Madison, Wisconsin
Contact: World Dairy Expo (608) 224-6455

November

Farmfair International 2000
November 4 - 12
Northlands Agricom
Edmonton
Contact: Northlands Park (780) 471-7210

Canadian Western Agribition
November 19 - 26
Exhibition Park
Regina, Saskatchewan
Contact: Canadian Western Agribition (306) 565-0565

December

S.A.C.A. (Southern Alberta Conservation Association) Fall Conference & Trade Show
December 5 - 6
Cypress Center, Medicine Hat Exhibition & Stampede Grounds
Medicine Hat
Contact: Pat Pavan – Reduced Tillage Technologist
(403) 327-9215 Cell: (403) 382-8545

January, 2001

Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference
January 12 - 14, 2001
Capri Centre
Red Deer
Contact: Horse Industry Section, Alberta Agriculture
(403) 948-8538

Banff Pork Seminar
January 23 - 26, 2001
Banff Centre
Banff
Contact: Banff Pork Seminar (780) 492-3236

July, 2001

XIV International Plant Nutrition Colloquium
July 28 - August 3, 2001
University of Hannover
Hannover, Germany
Contact: IPNC Secretariat
+49-(0)511-762-2626
+49-(0)511-762-3611

November, 2001

Canadian Western Agribition
November 18 - 25, 2001
Exhibition Park
Regina, Saskatchewan
Contact: Canadian Western Agribition (306) 565-0565

Coming agricultural events notice

1. Do you know of any provincial (Alberta), national or international agricultural meetings, conferences or conventions coming in 2000 or 2001. Please state the **name** of the event(s):

2. **When** is the event being held?

3. **Where** is the event being held? Include city or town; hotel or convention centre, if known:

4. Please give **name**, **city** or **town**, and **phone number** of a **contact person** for each event listed:

5. This form has been **completed by** what organization? Please include your phone number:

Please return this form by May 19, 2000 to:

Lee Anne Palutke, Agri-News Editor
Communications Division
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6
Phone: (780) 422-6958
Fax: (780) 427-2861
E-mail: agrinews@agric.gov.ab.ca

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The next list will be released June 5, 2000.

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Agri-News

March 27, 2000

Bill 202 – just what is a nuisance?

Bill 202, the *Farming Practices Protection Statutes Amendment Act*, was proclaimed on March 20, 2000. Tom Thurber, MLA - Drayton Valley, sponsored this Private Member's Bill to further strengthen Alberta's Right to Farm law.

"Recognizing that Alberta is the second largest agricultural producer in Canada, Bill 202 further protects agricultural operations from legal actions based on nuisance claims," says Thurber. "It amends the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* and the *Municipal Government Act*. The purpose of the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* is to ensure that producers who are following municipal land-use bylaws and using generally accepted agricultural management practices, will not be subject to nuisance lawsuits."

The *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* also ensures that agricultural operations are still protected should changes be made to municipal land-use bylaws. The new Act also protects agricultural operations in cases where there is a change in ownership of an agricultural operation; where the operation will be run by other persons; or, if there is a change in neighbouring land-use.

"Bill 202 protects agricultural operations from nuisance lawsuits by more clearly defining what a nuisance may be and by ensuring that the initiator of a nuisance claim is aware that, if unsuccessful, they would be liable for all costs incurred," adds Thurber.

The *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* is amended as follows:

Section 1 is amended by adding a clear definition of nuisance.

"Nuisance" includes an activity which

- arises from unreasonable, unwarranted or unlawful use by a person of the person's own property which causes obstruction or injury to the right of another person or to the public and produces such material annoyance, inconvenience and discomfort that damage will result,
- creates smoke, odour, noise or vibration which interferes with the reasonable and comfortable use of a person's property, or
- is found to be a nuisance at common law.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND

Section 2 is amended by adding the following provision:

In an action in nuisance against a person who carries on an agricultural operation, a court may:

- order the party that commenced the action to furnish security for costs in any amount the court considers proper;
- award party and party costs and solicitor and client costs or either of them.

"Bill 202 also includes amendments to the *Municipal Government Act*, however, these do not come into effect until April 2002," says Thurber. "These amendments are not being proclaimed until then to give municipalities time to change their municipal development plans."

The amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* will require that municipal land use bylaws be amended to:

- include provisions for notice to owners of land adjacent to agricultural operations;
- consider policies respecting the protection of agricultural operations when a new bylaw is prepared.

"This Bill draws things together," says Thurber. "It ensures that people who are moving out to Alberta's rural areas know beforehand that there will be farm activities going on, activities that are very different from urban activities and activities that may create noise, dust or odours. On the other hand, farmers will know that they have to follow accepted practices.

"The Bill also sends a clear message to municipalities and councils, that farmers have rights–historic rights with the land, rights to farm. It emphasises that these rights cannot be overlooked."

Threatening weather can mean that farm machinery works long into the night to get a crop off before a forecasted rain. Knowing up-front that these types of practices are sometimes simply part of the business of agriculture, should help newer rural dwellers understand and accept these possibilities as part of life in rural Alberta.

Contact: *Tom Thurber,*
MLA Drayton Valley, Calmar
(780) 415-0981

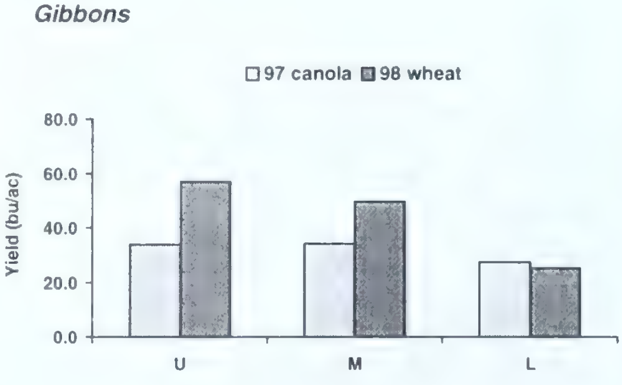
Len Fullen
Senior Policy Analyst
(780) 422-2285

Yield variations within farm fields

Producers interested in precision farming are interested in predictable patterns of yield, so that planning for an expected result can occur. If areas of a field yield poorly in most years, a producer can expect to reduce management inputs there. Testing whether yield patterns can be related to a plant's position on the topography or "landscape" is part of a study being conducted in cooperation with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Matching Investment Initiative Program (with funding from Norwest Labs, Agrium and Westco). It is expected that yield differences by landscape will reflect underlying differences in soil properties and water flow, giving a basis upon which to make 'with-in field' management decisions.

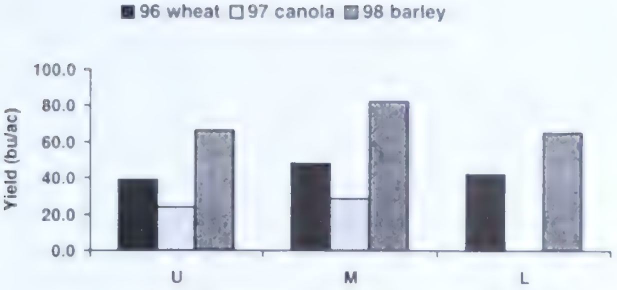
"Since 1996, yield differences within three fields representing different topographic conditions in Alberta have been measured," says Sheilah Nolan, research agrologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "One field was located on strongly rolling topography near Hussar, one on hummocky terrain near Stettler and the third on a sandy ridge over clay loam near Gibbons. We located three transects from hilltop to valley bottom, for a total of about 90 points per field. Each transect point was located using a Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS)."

From 1996 to 1998, yearly measurements of yield were made at each point using a plot combine. Measurements of soil properties and yearly measurements of fertility (at 25 per cent of the points) and soil moisture (15 per cent of the points) were made. Nearby weather stations measured climate. Rainfall and temperature were within the range of "normal" in 1996 and 1998. The middle year, 1997, was very dry during the critical grain filling period in July. To test whether yield differed by landscape position, the yield was grouped into classes of upper (U), mid (M) and lower (L) segments.

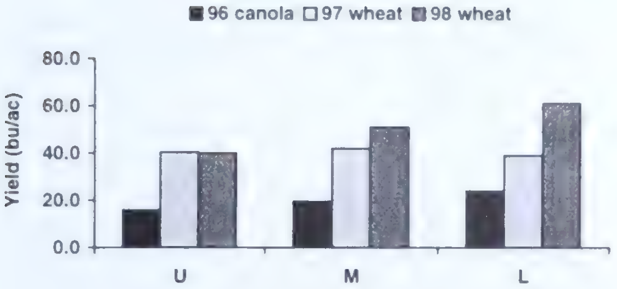


Cont'd on page 3

Stettler



Hussar



"A wide range of possible yield patterns at all sites were observed," says Nolan. "However, for years with normal weather, the yield pattern by landscape position tended to be similar within a site, but different between sites. For example, at Hussar in both 1996 (canola) and 1998 (wheat), the yield was greatest in the L positions and increased up slope: L>M>U. This pattern appears to be due to lower fertility (but not to lower moisture) in the U position, likely caused by erosion. At Stettler, the pattern was M>L=U in both 1996 (wheat) and 1998 (barley), likely due to fertility limitations from erosion on the U positions and to excess moisture in the L positions. At Gibbons (no 1996 data), the pattern was again different, with U>M>L, due to weeds in 1998. In 1997, there were no differences between yield at any of the landscape positions, at any of the three sites. Likely due to the dry July."

The relative consistency of yield pattern by landscape position within sites during years of normal weather conditions suggests that the method of separating yield based on landscape position may be successful. However, these normal conditions only occurred for two out of three years at the Hussar and Stettler sites and one out of two years at the Gibbons site. Variable management strategies will require an understanding of the effects of variable weather conditions.

"The variation in yield pattern between sites emphasizes the site-specific nature of precision farming and the need for each producer to understand the variations that exist within each field in local climatic conditions," adds Nolan. "The best place to start characterizing, and ultimately understanding yield variability is within each field."

Starting with a field with lots of topographic difference gives an opportunity to monitor more pronounced extremes. This helps with understanding the particular causes of yield variability in that field. Yield variation can be measured with yield monitors, or by taking 1-m^2 clips. Areas representing different landscape segments and/or those known to yield differently can be represented by sketches of the field or on aerial photographs and monitored for yearly changes.

"After mapping areas where yield patterns occur consistently, the next step is to understand the reasons for it," says Nolan. "This is where agronomic and diagnostic skills will be challenged and enhanced. Careful observation of weeds, pests, moisture and climatic conditions, coupled with soil sampling provide valuable opportunities to improve the understanding of limitations to crop yield. This will improve producers' ability to fine-tune management for environmental sustainability and while optimizing production."

Contact: *Sheilah Nolan*
(780) 427-3719

Money for school – 4-H Scholarships

4-H members in Alberta have the opportunity to access thousands of dollars each year for their post secondary education. "Several corporate and private sponsors have donated money to assist 4-H'ers with university or college," says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H media and marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

The Provincial 4-H Scholarship program will award close to 100 scholarships this year. New additions to the program are awards from Ivomec, Compak Filter Service, the Peace 4-H Region and the Provincial 4-H Alumni.

At least 15 Ivomec scholarships worth $1000 each, are available to Alberta 4-H'ers. Applicants will be judged based on their degree of community and volunteer involvement. Additionally, all Ivomec applicants are required to submit a presentation, such as an essay, video, speech, or poster based on the statement: *A New Millennium of Animal Health – Looking Back, Looking Forward.*

The ComPak Filter Services Environmental Scholarship will be awarded to a recipient who has participated in a 4-H environmental clean up initiative. To qualify for the $1000 award the 4-H'er must also be enrolled in an environmental program of study at any accredited post secondary institution.

A 4-H member of the Peace Region will receive a $300 scholarship based on 4-H involvement, communication skills and leadership.

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The $400 Provincial 4-H Alumni Scholarship was established to provide support to 4-H members who are pursuing a post secondary education. The recipient must have demonstrated outstanding leadership skills, community involvement, and communication skills.

"The 2000 Alberta Provincial 4-H Scholarship program totals more than $58,000," says Sullivan. "Current or former members who have at least two years 4-H experience and are planning to attend a post secondary institution full-time in the 2000-2001 school year should apply. These funds help 4-H'ers achieve their academic goals and personal dreams."

Downloading the Provincial 4-H Scholarship application from Alberta Agriculture's web site is easy. Access it on the internet at **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/ruraldev/4h>**. Applications must be mailed to the 4-H Branch by May 15, 2000. For more information on 4-H scholarships call (780) 422- 4H4H.

Contact: Carol Sullivan
(780) 422-4H4H

When to begin grazing

When spring is in the air, it's always tempting to put cattle out on pasture and reduce feeding time and costs, and in some cases, reduce disease problems such as calf scours. But what affect does early or continuous grazing have on the quality and quantity of pasture?

"Research clearly shows total dry matter production from two cuts or grazings is greater than taking three, four or more cuts or grazings per year. So, when cattle are placed on pasture earlier, there is less total dry matter production during the growing season," says Harvey Yoder, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lac La Biche. "Continuous grazing will lower the dry matter production considerably when compared to pasture where a grazing system has been used that allows for rest periods two to four times per year."

Plants require food for growth. They make their own food through photosynthesis, a process unique to green plants. Photosynthesis will only occur when plants have green leaves, stems or both. The photosynthesis process allows the plant to build up carbohydrate reserves to be used for early spring growth or for growth at any time after the plant has been grazed or cut.

"The lowest level of carbohydrates in grass plants occurs in the spring after the plants are in the 2 to 4-leaf stage," continues Yoder. "Grazing in early spring reduces the plant's ability to capture sunlight to build up carbohydrate levels in the crown and roots. Continuously grazed, these same plants become weaker and eventually die if never given the chance to rest and build up the needed carbohydrate levels needed for growth. During rest periods there is more top growth that allows a greater storage of carbohydrates and root development. When these plants don't obtain sufficient top growth, there will be limited response to spring fertilizer applications."

Not all grasses are the same and some varieties can withstand continuous grazing, while others cannot. All grass plants have a growing point. In grasses such as timothy, smooth bromegrass and alfalfa the growing point is at the top of the stem. When the stem is cut or grazed, there is no more production on that particular stem. New production must come from the crown or base of the plant. Grasses such as creeping red fescue, crested wheat grass and meadow bromegrass have growing points that are much closer to the ground. These plants have the ability to regrow faster than plants having a higher growing point. Lawn grass, which is generally made up from Kentucky blue grass and creeping red fescue can be mowed on a weekly basis without there being any growth problems.

"If cattle will be grazing on creeping red fescue, crested wheat grass and meadow foxtail, all which have low growing points, producers can begin grazing earlier than other grasses," says Yoder. "Ideally, it would be best to wait until there is six to eight inches of growth before grazing begins. When planning grazing rotations, it's important to remember that there is considerably faster growth in the spring compared to later in summer when growth declines. In other words, the faster the grass is growing, the faster the rotation should be."

Grazing too early certainly reduces a pasture's ability to be productive and to remain healthy. If pasture grasses don't have the opportunity to build a good top growth that can collect the needed energy from the sun, producers can expect less pasture production.

Contact: Harvey Yoder
(780) 623-5218

Will lingonberry grow in Alberta?

The lingonberry (*Vaccinium vitisa-idaea* L.) is a woody evergreen dwarf shrub growing 12 to 18 inches high. Lingonberry plants grow best in acidic soils where the pH measures between five and six, with at least two per cent organic matter.

"Lingonberry is distributed worldwide in northern temperate, boreal and subarctic areas," says Kris Pruski, entomologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "In addition to its inherent cold-hardiness, once covered with insulating snow, it survives northern winters from Northern U.S. to Alaska. With proper soil conditions, it is one of the few fruits that gardeners can grow successfully in cold climates."

Cont'd on page 5

Lingonberries are self-pollinating, but, cross pollination will improve the size of the fruit. Bees are the best natural lingonberry pollinators. Small, pinkish-white blossoms open in tight clusters at the tips of one-year old shoots by the end of May. Fruits are produced in late July to early August. In general, two blooms are observed - the May bloom produces fruits that ripen in midsummer and the summer bloom that occurs when fruits from the May bloom are ripening, produces fruits that ripen in September to early October.

"Open flowers are only hardy to about -2 degrees Celsius, which makes them vulnerable to the late frost," continues Pruski. "The second crop, however, is the largest and sometimes the only one in the season. The September fruit that ripens in cooler temperatures, sometimes with a frost has the best color and flavor."

Plants need about three years to begin bearing good crops. Throughout its natural range, a multitude of lingonberry fruit uses are reported. These include juice, sauce, syrup, preserves, candy, jelly, ice cream, wine and liqueurs.

"Lingonberries are slightly smaller than cranberries but otherwise look and are cooked the same," says Pruski. "Fruits should be picked firm, deep red and refrigerated immediately. The tart berries have a very distinct flavor. They make excellent jams and pie fillings. Lingonberries are very rich in vitamin C and are used by Scandinavians and native tribes from northern Canada as a cold remedy."

Lingonberry fruit is harvested mainly from the wild throughout its distribution in northern regions of the world. Major exporting countries are Sweden, Finland and Russia. Canada is the major source of the fresh fruit in North America. The majority of lingonberries come from Newfoundland where the fruit is produced commercially as well as collected in the wild.

"In Newfoundland the Lingonberry is called partridgeberry," adds Pruski. "Over the last 10 years, growing partridgeberry has become a profitable business and the acreage in Newfoundland is steadily increasing. The total production comes close to 10 metric tonnes per year, which is substantial for a gourmet fruit. Lingonberry may have a limited potential in Alberta as a specialty fruit for the gourmet food market."

There are at least 20 different common names for lingonberries including: lowbush cranberry, dryground cranberry, moss cranberry, alpine cranberry, shore cranberry, rock cranberry, lingenberry, lingen, lingon, partridgeberry, cowberry, foxberry, redberry and red whorleberry.

In addition to its value as a fruit crop, lingonberry is highly regarded as an ornamental plant in landscaping. It is used as a ground cover or an informal edging around larger acid-soil plantings. Fruits stay long into the fall and are a perfect food source for birds.

Climatically lingonberry is suited for some regions of Alberta. The soil, however, may require artificial acidification with ammonium sulphate and sawdust and peatmoss can be used to increase the organic matter content," says Pruski. "Research studies at the University of Wisconsin show that plants grow best when up to seven pounds of peatmoss is incorporated into each 100 square feet of row. Mulching with sawdust, pine needles, chopped straw or peatmoss helps to keep weeds under control during establishing the plantation. This is a low-maintenance crop that requires very little fertilizer and, except for the occasional removal of dead and damaged shoots every spring, requires very little pruning.

Established demand for lingonberry fruit exists throughout much of the northern hemisphere. Besides climatic and soil restrictions, successful introduction of lingonberry to Alberta will depend on the ability to supply the market with a high quality product.

Contact: *Kris Pruski*
(780) 425-2316

Picking the perfect perennials

A perennial border can be a thing of colorful beauty that, when established, requires very little maintenance. Once the planning and decisions on location, size and shape of a perennial border have been made, the fun begins – picking the plants. The only limiting factor when it comes to choosing the plants are the soil conditions and the sun exposure.

"Plants come in different forms like fans, rounded, prostrate and columnar and each shape creates different visual movement," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South, Brooks. "Fan shaped plants draw the line of vision up to the fan top then the eye stops and looks, columnar shapes draw the eye upward to the top of them and then outward, mounding or prostrate plants bring the eye downward to the ground."

Fine textured plants make a small border seem larger by giving the eye more to look at while coarse textured plants are best in a large border. These coarse textured plants give substance to the design. In a small border, use a few coarser textured plants as accents, but use them sparingly as too many may be hard for the eye to take in.

"Colors convey feelings to us, the water colors like blue and blue green are calming, while the fire colours like red and orange are exciting," says Barkley. "Blue, blue-green and violet recede and tend to increase the border or yard size while red and orange decrease the size and advance forward. White, grey or silver will buffer clashing colors and will also brighten up a dark or heavy textured planting. Colors with a high degree of

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luminosity like yellow or white brighten up the shade and lighten up heavy or monotonous masses of dark green. These same colors are ineffective in bright sunny spots but in a night garden they can be stunning since they are highly reflective. The dark colors like bronze, red or purple recede into the background and can cause a border to actually look smaller than it is. In a narrow border use them selectively. Remember that green is a colour too – let it be seen."

Place the smallest growing plants in the front and graduating to the tallest in the back or centre of the bed. Blend different plant heights to eliminate noticeable steps. Where annual plants are placed in drifts or masses, perennials are planted singly or in groups of three, five or seven. Peonies seem to look best when planted alone, where as iris plants lend themselves to planting in clumps of three or five. Aim for all the same flower colour in the clump as this is calming for the eye.

"A perennial border is an evolving thing," adds Barkley. "Plant a new border a bit at a time or get plants from friends, this helps cut down the cost. Keep records of what you do, flowering times and the weather. Note things that should be changed. Plants can always be dug up and moved if they don't fit into the scheme of things."

Alberta Yards and Gardens – What to Grow, an Alberta Agriculture publication, has a chapter on perennials. The publication describes flower color, height, growing requirements and special features of over 100 perennials.

Alberta Yards and Gardens – What to Grow is available at Alberta Agriculture district regional advisory services (RAS) offices and from the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Cost of the publication is $15, plus GST. VISA and MasterCard orders can be placed by calling 1-800-292-5697. The shipping and handling cost per order is $2, plus GST.

Contact: *Shelley Barkley*
(403) 362-1305

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Agri-News Briefs

Management training for the swine industry

A two-day seminar on Understanding Swine Behaviour will cover the behaviour of pigs during each phase of the production cycle, with an emphasis on demonstrating the relationship between management practices and pig behaviour. Additional sections will examine social behaviour, the development and control of behavioural vices and pig transport. The animal welfare issue will be examined, using the 'Five Freedoms' as a basis for identifying important issues within the industry. The seminar is being held at Olds College on April 25 and 26, 1999. Cost of the seminar is $280 per person. For more information, contact Michelle Follensbee at (780) 415-0828, e-mail **<michelle.follensbee@agric.gov.ab.ca>**. For further information or to register, contact Mary Metersen, coordinator of training programs, Prairie Swine Centre Inc. (306) 477-1674 or Olds College, 1-800-661-6537, (403) 556-4684 in Olds.

Klaas Slomp appointed to Dairy Board

Klaas Slomp, a dairy producer from Nobleford, was appointed by an Order in Council of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the Alberta Dairy Board on March 8, 2000. He replaces James Hunter, who served as a Board member since 1985. "Klaas Slomp is highly respected by his peers and will be a strong and knowledgeable advocate for the industry," says Jim Heron, chairman of the Dairy Board. "His past involvement in the dairy industry has demonstrated strong leadership at the producer level." In addition to six years as a member of the Alberta Agriculture Development Corporation appeal committee for the County of Lethbridge, Slomp has been a local delegate for the United Grain Growers. His public service to the dairy industry includes 15 years as a directorof the Lethbridge Milk Producers Association and 10 years as a director of Alberta Milk Producers. Slomp has served as a producer representative to the Dairy Board's Policy Committee for 10 years, the last six as chairman. Slomp is a partner in a diversified farming operation encompassing a large dairy operation, cattle feedlot and ranch. He and his wife have three children which have kept him very involved in family and community activities. For further information, contact James Heron (780) 361-1231, Wetaskiwin.

Agri-News

April 3, 2000

U.S. trade actions against Canadian cattle exports end

The U.S. countervailing and anti-dumping investigations on imports of live cattle from Canada are now over.

"Both investigations were initiated in December, 1998, in response to petitions filed by the Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund (R-CALF), a coalition of American cattle producers," says Len Ewanyk, senior trade policy analyst with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "R-CALF alleged that Canadian cattle were unfairly subsidized and were being dumped – that is sold at prices below the cost of production – into the US market. The group claimed that the unfair trading practices of Canadian producers were depressing American prices and they requested that offsetting duties be imposed on cattle imports from Canada."

Two separate rulings by US government trade bodies eventually ruled against the American cattle producers and dismissed both allegations. In the anti-dumping case, the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) ruled in a 5-1 vote that imports of Canadian cattle have not caused injury to the US industry, ending the investigation and removing the temporary anti-dumping duty imposed earlier in the investigation by the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC). The ITC ruling also resulted in a refund of millions of dollars in duties collected from Canadian exporters during the period the duty was imposed.

In the subsidy investigation, the DOC dismissed R-CALF's claim that Canadian producers are unfairly subsidized. The DOC determinated that the level of subsidy provided by all the government programs combined was insignificant, ending the investigation that could have led to countervailing duties being imposed on Canadian cattle imports.

"R-CALF appealed the rulings, but recently withdrew both appeals, preventing the need for another long and expensive round of legal wrangling," says Ewanyk. "Both investigations are finally over. It's great news for the Canadian cattle industry and ends months of uncertainty over access to U.S. markets."

Contact: *Len Ewanyk*
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Control pasture threatening weeds

There are many herbicides that effectively control weeds in native and seeded pastures. Some of these are safe to use when grazing animals on the pasture, others are not. Careful planning should be employed before decisions are made regarding what herbicides to use.

"Herbicides, such as Roundup, effectively kill weeds but also kill other vegetation on contact," says Dwight Tannas, public lands technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Rocky Mountain House. "Tordon 22K is effective, kills all broadleaf plants and has a residual effect in the soil for up to five years. This means that no broadleaf plants can be grown on the treated land for five years. The use of Lontrel may also limit possible crop choices in successive years."

Knowing what type of weed is causing problems in a pasture, where the main problem areas are and what type of herbicide and application rate will be most effective, are factors that must be included in the decision making process. Spot spraying only infected areas of a pasture is the preferred application method. Spot spraying also reduces costs.

The information needed to make the best decisions on herbicide, insecticide or other chemical treatment needs for this year's crops is available in ***Crop Protection 2000***. This publication, commonly called the Blue Book, is produced each year to keep Alberta farmers up-to-date with information on herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides.

"The Blue Book includes information on new chemicals, the latest registered mixes, on sprayer tank clean-out, application tips, expected results, storage and first aid precautions," adds Shaffeek Ali, acting leader, pest prevention and management unit with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's pest prevention and regulatory unit.

Crop Protection 2000 can be purchased for $10, plus GST. It is available at all Alberta Agriculture regional advisory services offices or the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. VISA and MasterCard orders can be placed by calling 1-800-292-5697. Shipping and handling cost per order is $2, plus GST.

Identification, advance planning and proper use are important concepts in protecting crops and pastures.

Contact: Shaffeek Ali
(780)422-4909

Why grow winter cereals?

Winter cereals offer unique advantages in crop rotations. Popularity of the crop has declined, but given developments in seeding technology and the introduction of new varieties, there are many reasons to take a hard look at winter cereals when planning crop rotations.

"Winter cereals add a whole new dimension to fall harvest," says Grant Nelson, reduced tillage agronomist, with Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), Stettler. "Seeding when you should be harvesting requires a different mind set, however, there are some time management advantages to this system. Often, when morning conditions are not suitable for harvest, seeding conditions are good. If you prepare well in advance for seeding in the fall, the task is not that much more difficult than spring seeding."

If there is difficulty getting onto a piece of land in the spring, the advantage of winter cereals will seem obvious. Winter cereals make it possible to have a portion of the crop up and growing, using excess moisture, when other crops cannot be seeded.

"Seeding depth is shallower for winter cereals than for other cereal crops," adds Nelson. "In grasses and cereals the coleoptile is the first part of the plant to emerge in the spring. The coleoptile is a stiff sheath that protects the young leaf as it forces its way up through the soil. Winter cereals have a shorter coleoptile than spring cereals and, as a result, seeding too deep will reduce the rate of emergence and vigor of the crop. When seeding winter cereals don't exceed a one inch seeding depth. It is actually better to seed into dust and pray for rain than to seed too deeply."

Seeding rate for winter cereals is generally higher than for spring cereals. The goal should be a plant count of 200 plants/m2 (18 to 19 plants/ft2) or higher. A good publication for calculating seeding rates is ***Using 1,000 Kernel Weight for Calculating Seeding Rates and Harvest Losses*** (Agdex 100/22-1). This publication is available at all district Alberta Agriculture offices.

Although winter wheat can tiller a great deal, seeding rates to reach optimal seed rate goals will be higher than seeding rates used for spring wheat. This is due to winter mortality.

Timing the seeding is critical with winter cereals. In southern Alberta the ideal seeding date is between September 10 and 20. In central Alberta the target date is between September 1 and 10. In Northern Alberta (Vermilion) seeding between August 25 and September 5 will usually guarantee best results. Seeding before August 20 allows too much vegetative growth and increases winter kill. Seeding after September 15 does not provide enough time for the winter cereal to store adequate reserves in the crown (base of the stem) to overwinter. Two to three leaves are needed to help ensure overwintering success.

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"Winter cereals are most successful when direct seeded into stubble," says Nelson. "A good cover of straw over the winter captures insulating snow that protects the cereal, preventing very low temperatures from causing winter kill. Straw cover also creates a micro climate that prevents warming trends from bringing the winter cereal out of dormancy before the winter is over. Lastly, standing stubble traps snow, providing precious early spring moisture for crop growth."

When harvesting the crop prior to seeding winter wheat, spreading straw and chaff is important. Rob Graff, winter wheat breeder for Agriculture and Agri-food Canada in Lethbridge, points out that crops such as canola produce a very fluffy chaff that can bridge, making an effective barrier to winter wheat seedlings. To prevent this problem the combine should be equipped with a chaff spreader. Straw and chaff management is an essential component to any direct seeding system.

"Fall moisture is critical to get winter cereals growing before winter strikes. Direct seeding reduces moisture loss and leaves straw cover to reduce evaporation," adds Nelson.

Planning to grow a winter cereal requires careful consideration on crop choice the year prior to seeding. Barley is often seen as a good choice because it matures early and produces good stubble. Seeding the usual barley variety, or better yet, seeding an early maturing variety first thing in the spring, will ensure sufficient time to get the crop off before seeding a winter cereal. Oats is another crop for consideration. Seeding canola prior to winter cereals reduces disease and insect pressure but be careful not to use residual herbicides on canola if planning a winter cereal. Crops, such as peas and canola have a draw-back as they break down rapidly, reducing available straw for cover. Peas have an advantage in maturing early and providing nitrogen over the next growing season if properly inoculated.

"Winter cereals can be seeded in the fall following a silage crop, providing that sufficient straw remains to allow for snow cover," says Nelson. "For adequate straw cover after cutting a silage crop, a six inch straw height is preferred; four inches might work if snow cover is usually good. Fall seeded, or early seeded canola will provide good opportunity for fall seeding."

In the dryer parts of the province, producers successfully grow winter wheat on chemical fallow. Wheat or barley stubble will resist breakdown sufficiently through the summer to allow fall seeding of winter cereals. The moisture stored over the fallow season will be available to the winter crop, taking advantage of that water. Clint Steinley, a producer from the Empress area, grows canary seed as the crop prior to fallow when growing winter wheat.

"Canary seed provides a good strong stubble that carries through over the winter," says Steinley.

There are also crop rotation advantages to growing canary seed in south eastern Alberta. The final Roundup application for the chemical fallow also serves as the pre-seed burn down prior to seeding winter wheat

Contact *Grant Nelson*
(403)742-7500

Preparing for a pea crop

One of the best ways to plan for this year's pea crop is to get a copy of the new publication ***Pulse Crops in Alberta***. This 150-page book, written by the pulse and special crops specialists of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, contains up-to-date pulse crop information for Alberta conditions. Detailed information is available on all major pulse crops, pea, bean, lentil, and fababean. There is also information on chickpea, fenugreek, grasspea, lupin and soybean.

"One other aspect of preparing for a pea crop is preplanning your weed control," says Neil Miller, pulse and special crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Lacombe. "Recent weed research by Dr. Neil Harker of the Lacombe Research Centre has shown how important early weed control is in pea crops. Delaying weed control even a few days can result in greatly reduced yields, even though the weed control was good. Peas are poor competitors with weeds and need several weeks growth before they become competitive."

To lessen weed competition, variety selection is important. Varieties perform differently in the various agro-climatic areas. Choose the variety that will be most vigorous and hardy based on information contained in the provincial annual variety recommendations for Alberta areas.

"Weed control starts by looking at the weed situation, knowing what weeds are present, and how likely they are to be a problem," adds Miller. "Weed control in Pea factsheets are available from Alberta Agriculture. Information can also be accessed directly on the Alberta Agriculture website. The website also features a weed control calculator that can help when making decisions. Another source of good weed control information is ***Crop Protection 2000***, the *Blue Book*."

Glyphosate, applied preharvest in the year before seeding pea is currently one of the best ways of reducing weed competition in a pea crop. This is especially useful in reducing populations of perennial weeds such as Canada thistle, sowthistle, toadflax, and quackgrass.

"Some soil residual herbicides can cause problems in pea production," says Miller. "Residues in the soil can kill the germinating plants, or reduce their ability to compete with the weed populations that are present. Check the recropping restrictions that can affect pea production in the *Blue Book*, or on the internet."

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Soil type, pH and agro-climatic area can effect pea production. As well, pH can affect the rhizobia bacteria that are used to innoculate your pea crop, in addition to having an effect on soil residual herbicides. The soil zone helps determine the variety of pea that should be grown. Pea do best in a well drained soil. They need good soil aeration, and can not stand compacted or waterlogged soils. Be sure to check the soil for salt content. Pulse crops have a very low tolerance for salts in the soil.

Producers who have questions on pulse crop production, can contact one of Alberta Agriculture's pulse crop specialists at Grande Prairie, Barrhead, St. Paul, Lamont, Vermilion, Lacombe, Olds, or Lethbridge.

Pulse Crops in Alberta, a new publication, can be purchased for $25, plus GST. It is available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development regional advisory services offices or the Publications Office at 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. VISA and MasterCard orders can be placed by calling 1-800-292-5697. Shipping and handling cost per order is $2, plus GST.

Contact: Neil Miller
(403) 782-3301

29th session of Girls' Parliament opens

Five Alberta 4-H members will participate in the 29th session of Alberta Girls Parliament when it opens on March 29. "The program gives 4-H'ers the opportunity to showcase their public speaking skills," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie. Connie Kohout – Airdrie, Theresa Nelson – Stettler, Caitlyn DeBruyne – Westerose, Coreen Mathon – Innisfail and Martine Kleissen – Fort Macleod will join 36 other young Alberta women from Girl Guides of Canada to participate in this unique learning experience.

The delegates practise debating during four sittings and learn more about our parliamentary system through a tour of the Legislature that includes a visit with the Speaker of the House, the Honourable Ken Kowalski, MLA Barrhead-Westlock.

"They learn how and why Parliament operates. The experience also gives the girls a better understanding of their responsibilities as citizens," says Rosalyn Schmidt with Girl Guides.

The topics of the debates include: mandatory school uniforms in all Alberta schools; inmates serving at least 75 per cent of their sentence before being eligible for parole; and 60 per cent of the packaging on tobacco products being covered with the new graphic health advisory proposed by the federal government. "We keep the fourth topic, a fun debate, a surprise until just before the sitting," adds Schmidt.

At Girls Parliament, the premier, deputy premier, leader of the opposition, and speaker were all elected from delegates at last year's session. Jan Reimer, former Mayor of the City of Edmonton, will be the Honourary Lieutenant Governor of this session of Alberta Girls Parliament.

Guest speakers include the Honourable Lois Hole, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta; Frances Wright, president of the Famous 5 Foundation and Allyson Jeffs, provincial affairs writer with the Edmonton Journal. Also speaking to delegates about the responsibilities associated with their roles as politicians will be leader of the opposition, Nancy Macbeth, MLA Edmonton McClung and City of Edmonton councillor, Rose Rosenberger.

"We have been sending 4-H members to Alberta Girls Parliament for several years and it's always been a challenging and enlightening experience" Stark adds.

Contact: Marguerite Stark (403) 948-8510
Rosalyn Schmidt (403) 282-4125

Dugout pumping program stepped-up

On March 14, 2000, the dugout pumping program operated by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development received a $2 million injection to improve its ability to respond to water shortages experienced by farmers.

"A large number of rural landowners rely on water from spring snow-melt captured in earthen storages called dugouts," says Murray Tenove, water quality engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton. "Many parts of the province have experienced a number of years of extremely dry weather conditions. These continuous drought conditions have had a negative impact on water supplies and storage systems for livestock producers."

Alberta Agriculture currently maintains an inventory of six- and eight-inch aluminum pipe, trailers and water pumps that are available for rent by farmers who need to fill depleted dugouts that are used for domestic and livestock purposes. This additional funds committed to the dugout pumping program means an overall increase in pumping capacity of approximately one-third.

"Each spring the potential level of dugout pumping activity is gauged from regional contacts. Water supply monitoring efforts and the fleet is distributed to the six hubs within the province where a two to three person team coordinates and delivers equipment to the client," adds Tenove. "This year, the regular program starts on March 20 to take advantage of some spring snow melt opportunities."

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To get access to the equipment the client must fill out an application and leave a deposit through any Alberta Agriculture district office or contact one of the closest dispatch locations in the province. Basic information about the pumping project is collected along with the date the client would like the equipment. Any questions the renter may have are also answered. The renter must provide the tractor to power the pump and arrange to have people on site to lay-out and pick-up the pipe.

"Depending on scheduling and the level of activity going on at any given time, equipment can be available within a few days or on a date arranged with the coordinator," says Tenove. "In an area where multiple applications will likely be received, there can be an advantage for neighboring farmers to complete projects together. This is highly recommended, but, extra lead time is required to coordinate these larger projects. On-going communication and dependable equipment is the essential."

This year has the potential to be a very busy water pumping year. Farmers who feel they will need to access the equipment are encouraged to make an application as soon as possible.

Program details can be viewed on the Alberta Agriculture internet site at: <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/navigation/engineering/water/index.html**>.

Dispatch Locations:

- Lethbridge (403) 381-5112*
- Airdrie (403) 948-8503*
- Red Deer (403) 340-5322*
- Vermilion (780) 853-8113*
- Barrhead (780) 674-8256*
- Fairview (780) 835-2291*
- In the Peace River region, some counties can provide equipment

* Government phone numbers are toll free in Alberta by calling 310-0000 first.

Contact: Murray Tenove
(780) 427-4182

4-H Leaders travel to Hawaii

Alberta 4-H leaders Pat Pringle, Didsbury, and Doris Burdek, Lac La Biche, will join 4-H leaders from the western United States and Canada at the annual Western Regional 4-H Leaders Forum in Hawaii on March 25 - 29, 2000

Pringle has been a leader for 17 years and leads the beef project of the West Didsbury 4-H Multi club. She is also a 4-H key leader and a member of the Calgary regional council

Currently the foods project leader with the Lac La Biche 4-H club, Burdek has been a 4-H leader for 25 years and is also a 4-H key leader

Pringle and Burdek have more than 100 workshops to choose from during the conference. They plan to participate in educational and cultural workshops as well as 'workshops on the move' that feature local resource people and are located away from the hotel. Topics include food safety, creating youth and adult partnerships, strengthening partnerships with Native people, community mentors, livestock evaluation, cyberspace, ethical decision making and converging cultures.

Alberta's 4-H program has close to 3,000 volunteer leaders. 4-H leader development and chaperone programs are designed to recognize leaders who have contributed time and energy to local clubs, district, regional or provincial councils. "These programs offer leaders the opportunity to meet with other 4-H leaders, share and receive new ideas, learn new skills and visit new and interesting places," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie. "Leaders return to their clubs and communities with renewed enthusiasm."

For more information on 4-H call (780) 422-4H4H or visit the Alberta 4-H web site at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h**>.

Contact: Marguerite Stark
(403) 948-8510

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Pasture school

The Western Forage Beef Group has scheduled this year's Pasture School for June 13 to 15, 2000, in Lacombe. A variety of topics will be covered in seminars and field sessions during the three-day school, including: pasture planning; grass and legume growth and development; managing pasture production; grazing nutrition; pasture fertility and nutrient cycling; pasture species; alfalfa grazing; pasture rejuvenation; and, economics of a grazing operation. These, and more, presentations by leading edge graziers, consultants, forage and beef researchers, and extension specialists provide an opportunity for Albertans already practicing grazing management to learn even more. Attendance is limited, and early registration is recommended. Early bird registration (prior to May 1/00) is $285 for one person and $200 for each additional person from the same farm/ranch. Registration after May 1, 2000 is $310 for one person and $200 for each additional person from the same farm/ranch. For more information, or to register, contact Cathy Hendrickson (403) 782-8030 or Grant Lastiwka (403) 782-6120, Lacombe. Government numbers are toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000 first.

Manure Management 2000

A workshop on manure management is being offered on June 26 to 28, 2000 at the Coast Plaza Hotel in Calgary. The workshop takes a hands on look at issues, solutions, technologies and practices that will aide the livestock industry in the coming years. Presentations and topics being discussed include: why develop a manure management plan?; developing a manure management plan for a specific operation; identifying the best management practices for an operation; understanding the soil, landscape, water interactions and their implications; determining environmental risk; and how to manage manure properly. The workshop will help producers get a handle on manure management and help producers make the most of the nutrients in manure. For further information, contact Nancy Muchka, conservation agrologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (403) 948-8512, Airdrie.

Two new websites for Growers

Two new websites – <**www.oatgrower.com**> and <**www.growcanola.com**> – offer Canadian growers valuable, timely information on prices, production and trade data; weather and agronomic data; market analysis; news affecting crops – even marketing advice. The websites focus on delivering current data about oat and canola markets in particular. These new oat and canola grower sites, maintained by Statcom, provide Canadian producers with instant digital access to the latest market information. Access to better information, combined with expert analysis, significantly narrows the information gap between large grain companies and the average Canadian farmer. Information is collected from hundreds of global sources that impact Canadian growers and make it easily available. The websites are commodity-specific – <**www.oatgrower.com**> is dedicated to oat growers and <**www.growcanola.com**> is dedicated to canola growers. For more information, contact Randy Strychar, president of Statcom Ltd. at (604) 983-9942, Vancouver, B.C.

U of A Undergraduate scholarship in Agriculture established

The Special Crops Product Team of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and C.V. Technologies Inc. have established an undergraduate scholarship in the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics at the University of Alberta. It is awarded annually to a student who has demonstrated superior academic achievement and is entering the third or fourth year of a degree program majoring in Agriculture or Nutrition and Food Science, with an interest in production or use of special crops or nutraceuticals and functional foods of plant origin. The recipient is selected on the basis of academic standing. Amount of the scholarship is $1,250 per annum. Alberta Agriculture's Special Crops Product Team and C.V. Technologies are pleased to announce that Cindy Senio of Leduc is the first recipient of the ***Alberta Agriculture Special Crops Product Team/CV Technologies Inc. Special Crops Scholarship***. Senio is a fourth year student in the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics at the University of Alberta. She is pursuing her studies in food science and technology. For further information, contact Nabi Chaudhary, Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton, (780) 422-4054.

Agri-News

April 10, 2000

Pruning season for Elm trees in Alberta is over

This last winter you might have noticed certified pruners in elm trees removing dead branches or removing dead and severely weakened elm trees. To get ahead of the threat of Dutch Elm Disease (DED), a highly destructive fungal disease which can kill a healthy elm within three weeks, elm pruning has been going on throughout the province. Elm bark beetles, vectors of the DED fungus breed under dead and dying elm wood. Therefore, elm sanitation is essential to a DED prevention program.

"Pruning of elm trees in Alberta must only be done between October 1 and March 31 of the following year," says Janet Feddes-Calpas, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Provincial Dutch Elm Disease (DED) Prevention Program coordinator, Brooks. "Several municipalities already have an elm pruning bylaw in place that can result in a fine if elms are pruned after March 31. It is also illegal to transport or store elm firewood. All pruned elm wood must be burned or buried to prevent the possible spread of DED."

The annual pruning ban is in effect between April 1 and September 30 because the smaller European elm bark beetle (SEEBB) and the native elm bark beetle (NEBB) are active during this period. These beetles are attracted to the scent of elm wood sap, readily given off from the open wound after pruning. If the beetles have emerged out of infected DED wood, they can be carrying the fungal spores on their bodies, and spread the disease while they feed.

"Since 1978, when DED was first found in Manitoba, municipalities along with Alberta Agriculture have monitored for the EEBB and the NEBB," adds Feddes-Calpas. "Beetle monitoring is an important component to the Provincial DED Prevention Program and is done to determine if either vector is in the province. In 1999, 505 locations in the province were monitored for the beetles using pheromone sticky traps. Monitoring is done between April 1-Sept 30 in municipalities, nurseries, provincial parks and all ports-of-entry."

SEEBB have been captured in Calgary for the sixth year, in Edmonton for the fifth year, and in Medicine Hat and St. Albert for the second year. SEEBB have been captured in Vauxhall in 1996, in High River in 1997 and for the first time in Coutts in 1999. Additional surveillance for the disease is done in locations that have found the vectors.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND

"To date, there has been only one elm tree in Alberta that has tested positive for the DED fungus. This tree was found in Wainwright in 1998, removed and burned," continues Feddes-Calpas. "Although no vectors were found in Wainwright, infected firewood brought in from an area that has DED is the suspected cause. No other elm trees were found to have DED."

In 1999, surveys done in Saskatchewan identified DED numbers were up from the previous years. Last year, 911 DED infected trees were removed in the southeastern corner of the province. The disease was found for the first time in the Town of Davidson, approximately 100 km south of Saskatoon. This was a significant move into the central part of the province. The closest sight to Davidson fighting the disease is 100 km south, in Buffalo Pound Provincial Park near Moose Jaw. Davidson is not far from the large populations of native elm in Outlook. "With DED now present in that area, we can expect the disease to speed up its advance into northwestern Saskatchewan, moving it nearer to Alberta," cautions Feddes-Calpas.

Alberta needs to stay diligent in the fight against DED. "Alberta is one of the few places in the world left with large populations of American elm trees valued at $634 million, that are free from the scourge of this fatal disease," says Feddes-Calpas. "Alberta's DED-free status is largely due to the hard work done by the Society to Prevent Dutch Elm Disease (STOPDED) and Alberta Agriculture.

In March of 1999, STOPDED employees traveled to every municipality in the province taking an elm inventory and increasing public awareness on DED prevention. Location and condition of each elm tree was recorded, identifying areas where more intensive surveillance is necessary due to the number and/or condition of the elm trees. This information was given to all the municipalities with recommendations to prune out the elm dead wood and to remove any dead elms listed in the inventory. A total of 219,334 elm grow in Alberta's urban areas.

Alberta can not afford to lose its elm trees! DED can be prevented and all Albertans can help.

For more information check out the Alberta Agriculture internet site at: **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/pests/diseases/ded/index.html>**

Contact: *Janet Feddes-Calpas*
(403) 362-1337

Growing winter cereals

"Fertility is one of the keys to successfully growing winter cereals," says Grant Nelson, Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), Stettler. "High yield potentials can only be met if sufficient nitrogen is made available to these crops.

A 40 bushel/acre winter wheat crop needs about 80 lbs/acre of nitrogen to grow. As it grows, a wheat crop takes nutrients from soil and fertilizer sources. Guaranteeing a good supply will increase the vigor and potential of this crop.

Side banding nitrogen with a double shoot system works well. Nitrogen should be placed at least one inch from the seed to avoid injury. If using a single shoot seeding system, spring broadcasting nitrogen is effective. Ammonium nitrate (34-0-0) is more stable, but urea can also be used under the right environmental conditions. Apply just after the soil has thawed. Early nitrogen application is important as 90 percent of the plant's nitrogen requirements must be met prior to heading.

"Other nutrients should not be ignored when growing winter wheat," continues Nelson. "Phosphate, potassium and sulfur should be added if deficient in the soil. Potassium and phosphate are often placed with seed when single shooting to ensure that adequate amounts of these relatively immobile nutrients reach the young plants. Physiological leaf spot occurs when chloride is not present in sufficient levels for winter wheat. Providing potassium chloride when seeding is one way to prevent this problem. Soil testing helps determine if there are sufficient nutrients to meet the crop's needs."

Weed control in winter cereals is usually less expensive than for other cereal crops. Wild oat control is seldom required, but should be monitored if the wheat stand is not growing vigorously in the spring. Winter annual weeds, such as stink weed and lamb's quarters, can be controlled with a late fall or early spring application of 2,4-D or MCPA. Winter wheat should not be seeded into fields where downy brome is present, although Sencor can be used in the spring. Glyphosate products applied in the fall prior to seeding will control most weeds which compete with emerging winter cereals. Perennial weeds should be controlled the year prior to seeding winter cereals.

"Winter cereals are usually ready to harvest at least two to three weeks before most spring seeded crops," adds Nelson. "There are also grazing, silage and green feed options for these crops. If swathing, be aware that winter cereals usually have little seed dormancy. While this trait is important to successful fall establishment, these crops cannot be left in swath for long periods. Aeration or drying may be necessary to allow harvest from the swath before sprouting. Straight cutting is a good option for winter cereal crops."

Cont'd on page 3

Winter cereals usually provide higher yields than spring cereals. Eighty bushel per acre yields are common in higher moisture areas. In lower moisture zones, 40 bushel yields are not uncommon.

Because these crops are highly competitive, wild oat herbicide is usually not required. Clint Steinley, a producer near Empress Alberta, usually takes the money he would have spent on wild oats and spends it on nitrogen.

"New varieties of winter cereals with superior winter hardiness, disease resistance and quality characteristics are now available," says Nelson. "Selecting the right variety for the intended purpose is very important."

Winter wheat is often grown for its superior milling quality. It can also be used as feed. For further information, contact the nearest crop specialist, ARTI agronomist or other extension workers for help when making this choice.

Current varieties of winter wheat include: AC Bellatrix, AC Readymade, AC Tempest, CDC Clair, CDC Falcon, CDC Harrier, CDC Kestrel, CDC Osprey and Norstar. Varieties of winter rye available include: AC Remington, AC Rifle, Danko, Kodiak, Musketeer and Prima. Winter Triticale choices include: Bobcat, Pika and Wintri.

There are many sources of information on winter cereals. The Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative has a fact sheet called ***Direct Seeded Winter Wheat*** (Agdex 112/22-1). The Alberta Agriculture Field Crop Development Centre's ***1999 Cereal Research Report*** has very good variety information. PAMI has a ***Direct Seeding Manual*** that covers winter cereals and many other aspects of direct seeding. Dr. Rob Graff, Agriculture and Agri-Food Council's ***Winter Cereals Canada*** and the Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission were sources of information for this article.

Contact: *Grant Nelson*
(403) 742-7500

Seeding intentions released

Statistics Canada offers some of the highest quality agricultural statistics in the world. That's not to say they are perfect, just that there are few sources anywhere that can compete for consistency, and accuracy.

"Each year, Statistics Canada releases seeded area estimates for the major crops," says Doug Walkey, market specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lacombe. "The acreage estimates come from a variety of sources including surveys of producers themselves, industry contacts and historic trends. These are verified by provincial agencies before publication."

The information is widely used by producers, investors and industry in guiding their business. Markets respond to increases or decreases in acreage, as some say 'buying acres' to even out trends and smooth out otherwise volatile markets.

This year a snap-shot summary of the projections includes

Durum	up 36%	Flax	down 39%
Wheat (other)	up 3%	Peas (dry)	up 15%
Barley	up 5%	Lentils	up 15%
Rye	down 27%	Canary	down 5%
Canola	down 11%	Chickpeas	up 10%

"This is a partial list and should be taken in context as well," adds Walkey. "Chickpeas, for example, are building on a large acreage base from last year putting estimates up to 165,000 ha for the 2000/01 crop year."

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada have gone a step farther and included price and yield forecasts with the area seeded estimates. These calculations project net returns of $35 to $148/ha for spring wheats (brown and black soil zones respectively); $9 to $88 for feed barley; and, $23 to $88 for canola. Keep in mind these are estimate values and should be validated by individual farm expenses.

This information is contained in the ***Bi-weekly Bulletin***, vol.13, No. 4, or from their **<website at http://www.agr.ca/policy/winn/biweekly/index.htm>**.

Contact: *Doug Walkey*
(780) 782-3301

YouthQUAKE 2000

4-H members, Janet Headon from Kitscoty and Charlene Mirus from Busby will join youth from every Canadian province and territory at YouthQUAKE 2000, being held March 24 to 29, 2000. Billed as Canada's largest youth training event, YouthQUAKE 2000, is a five-day camp that trains youth, aged 15 - 20 years, in the art of facilitation. Headon and Mirus will travel to the heart of downtown Toronto for the program.

"YouthQUAKE wanted young people who are leaders and have some conflict-resolution training under their belts," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie. "Headon, is a member of the Kitscoty 4-H Beef Club and Mirus, is a member of the Double Diamond 4-H Multi Club. As 4-H'ers, Headon and Mirus feel comfortable in front of groups and have great communication skills.

"Included in the training will be opportunities to visit some of Toronto's unique cultural and tourist attractions," adds Stark. "All YouthQUAKE delegates will also be extended an opportunity to facilitate R2K, YouCAN!'s second national youth conference on peace building and conflict resolution, November 10 - 13, 2000 in Cornwall."

YouCAN! is a national nonprofit charitable organization that works with young adults to: promote the peaceful resolution of personal, community, and societal conflicts; promote the concept of nonviolence, peer mediation and conflict

Cont'd on page 4

resolution; establish a Canadian network of peer mediators and youth peacemakers; and, to highlight and affirm the work of peacemakers of all ages, especially that of young Canadians. YouCAN! assists youth in exploring the connection between conflict resolution and violence prevention. This, combined with training workshops, provides youth with the skills and knowledge to make a real difference in our communities. These same skills will benefit them in their future careers and relationships.

The sponsors of YouthQUAKE 2000 are: YouCAN!, Department of Canadian Heritage and the City of Toronto

Contact: Marguerite Stark
(403) 948 8510

Cropping decisions

Many farmers are finding it difficult to make cropping decisions this year. Some farmers are in a position where choices are limited. Add to that the luke-warm prices of most crops and the genetically modified organism (GMO) issue, and there's a lot to consider before committing to the 2000 crop.

"Deciding to grow a crop isn't an option for most producers," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Wetaskiwin. "Several costs are already fixed, so as long as crop returns are higher than variable costs, farmers will be wrestling with a cropping decision."

Leaving fields idle, is not an option since even maintaining idle fields has costs, and then there's no opportunity to recover those costs. While summer fallow may make sense for an individual field, this has drawbacks, too. Soil is more prone to erosion, there's greater risk of salinity problems developing and any Nitrogen (N) released means a breakdown of soil organic material that can lead to structural problems in the future. Chem fallow or legume plowdown are other options for dealing with idle land, but again there are costs involved.

"When choosing a crop, careful budgeting of each choice is an important step," says Hockridge. "Equally important to consider are field history and future cropping plans. Crop rotations will yield higher returns in the long run, but there are times when producers have to make short-term decisions to take advantage of large price differences."

Cutting back on inputs can also make sense but should be approached with caution. The lowest cost per acre is not always the lowest cost per tonne or bushel. Knowing the effect of weeds on yield and normal fertilizer response curves can help farmers cut costs in the right places.

"For canola growers, the major canola customers are accepting genetically altered varieties on a par with traditional types, and crushers are very reluctant to enter identity preserved processes. Varieties with special oil qualities may be crushed separately, but their volumes will be low and there will be a higher cost associated with them."

Each farmer will have to make cropping decisions based on many factors. While it may not be an easy decision to make, many producers will lock in a decision based on their situation and, as always, go on faith for the rest.

Contact: Ron Hockridge
(780) 361-1240

4-H celebrates Canadians – our differences and similarities

Canadian citizenship carries with it many roles and responsibilities but also offers numerous opportunities, rights and freedoms unparalleled in many countries. Approximately 50 4-H members from across Canada will examine their rights, roles and responsibilities to their nation as they gather in Ottawa, April 7-13 to participate in the 29th annual National 4-H Citizenship Seminar.

4-H Key Leader Rhonda Clarke-Gauthier from Donnelly, will accompany six Alberta 4-H members. Erin Granigan, Edgerton; Danyelle Adkins, Okotoks; Barbara Fowlie, Bindloss; Joni Dechaine, Jarvie; Laura Bodell, Sherwood Park; and Angela VanHal, Scandia will participate in an exciting week in Ottawa.

The theme of this year's conference, *Canada...One Nation, One Heart, One Future* focuses on the opportunities inherent in living in our country, the diverse cultural make-up of our population and issues which will impact on Canada beyond the year 2000. Delegates will learn that every Canadian has an equally important role to play in Canada's social fabric and future.

Conference participants will explore the issue of Canadian diversity and multiculturalism with speakers from the Cross Culturalism and Race Relations Institute and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Mr. Patrick Carson, a former Executive with Loblaws Companies will also speak and provide delegates with some insight of global issues and how they impact Canada. Participants will attend a Citizenship Court ceremony where they will re-affirm their Canadian citizenship side by side with individuals being sworn in as new Canadians.

Delegates will be addressed by the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Honourable Gilbert Parent, a Member of Parliament as well as his scheduling assistant who will outline the duties of their positions. The 4-H'ers will tour the Parliament Buildings and the Supreme Court, view Question period and join MPs from their home ridings for a Parliamentary luncheon. They will also experience the political

Cont'd on page 5

process first-hand by participating in a simulated House of Commons debate. Political parties will be formed to argue the controversial issue of Canada's involvement in NATO.

"Our 4-H'ers will gain an understanding of the political process in Canada and become aware of how youth can influence that process", says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "They will gain an understanding of current issues that the government is working with.".

The success of any 4-H event is largely due to the generous financial assistance provided by its sponsors. Major supporters of the 2000 conference include: Department of Canadian Heritage, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Ambassador Travel Plus Golf & Cruise Centre, The Masonic Foundation of Ontario, Canadian Pacific, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Canadian Seed Growers' Association, SeCan Association, Manitoba 4-H Council, Canadian Cattlemen's Association and University of Guelph

For more information on 4-H call (780) 422-4H4H or visit the Alberta 4-H web site at <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
(403) 948 8510

Agri-News Briefs

Varieties of special crops

A new Agri-Facts factsheet, ***Varieties of Special Crops for Alberta*** (Agdex 140/32-1) includes information on tests completed throughout Alberta by the Special Crops Program of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South. The factsheet provides information about what grows and what doesn't in different areas in the province. Four areas within Alberta are identified: south, east central, west central and Peace. Crops tested include: field pea - yellow, field pea - green, dry bean (narrow row), dry bean (wide row), mustard, fababean, safflower, sunflower (non-oil type), chickpea, canary seed, lentil, grain corn hybrids, silage corn hybrids. The 1999 grain corn yields and the 1999 silage corn yields are also included in the factsheet. Producers can pick up these free factsheets at any Alberta Agriculture district office. They are also available at the Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. The factsheet is also available on-line at Alberta Agriculture's internet site <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/navigation/sustain/water/index.html**>.

Take away the bones...

The 1998 per capita consumption data was recently reported in the September 1999 issue of Agriculture Business Review. The report shows that Canadians, on average, consumed 52.2 pounds of beef and veal, compared with 71.6 pounds of poultry and 45.2 pounds of pork. The figures for beef and pork reflect what is purchased and taken home from the grocery stores, and most cuts of beef and pork are boneless. Poultry figures are based on the number of carcasses that go out from the packer. When considering boneless consumption, according to statistics published in the Royal Bank's ***Agriculture Business Review*** (02/00), Canadians actually eat more beef than pork or chicken. When comparing the three protein sources, after waste and fat are trimmed, and bones cut out, the 1998 per capita consumption was 46.77 pounds of beef; 42.30 pounds of pork; and, 34.35 pounds of chicken.

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Agri-News

April 17, 2000

SFEP and GCP partnership still strong in 2000

Summer Farm Employment Program (SFEP) applications will be available soon. High school students interested in a career in agriculture should also consider the Green Certificate Farm Training Program (GCP) as a way to enhance their learning, gain credits and earn a credential.

"SFEP provides Alberta's youth the opportunity to gain farm work experience as part of Alberta's Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP)," says Christine Paproski, program delivery specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "Since the program began in 1972, it has helped more than 37,000 young people learn about career opportunities in farming."

Through the program, full-time farmers receive assistance to hire young Albertans from July 1 to August 31. The Alberta government pays up to half of the employee's monthly wage to a maximum of $330 per month.

"Prospective employees must be unemployed, between 15 and 24 years of age, and must not be a relative of the employer," says Paproski. "Youth work a minimum of 30 hours per week and employees must be paid at least the provincial minimum wage, which is $5.90 per hour."

Up to 500 young people will be accepted into the 2000 program. Application forms are processed on a first-come, first-served basis and employers and employees must apply together.

Application forms and program guidelines for SFEP will be available on May 1 from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development field service offices. Application forms will be accepted until May 31 or until all program funds are committed, whichever comes first.

"Employers interested in supporting enhanced learning opportunities for Alberta youth and students interested in learning about agriculture and earning high school credits and an employment certificate should also consider the GCP," adds Robert Hornbrook, supervisor, GCP. "Youth interested in earning high school credits and certification should consult with their school counselor or contact the GCP at (780) 427-2171.

Contact:	*Christine Paproski*	*Robert Hornbrook*
	(403)427-3124	*(403)427-4218*

This Week

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Considering a greenhouse venture?

'Do your homework', a phrase heard by almost all Albertans when they were still in school. Those words still ring true, especially when contemplating starting a greenhouse operation or other value added venture. Market research is essential when beginning any new venture.

Start your research by asking some very pertinent questions:

- Who buys the crops?
- What do they want or need?
- Where are the customers located?
- When and where do they buy?
- What is the market size?

"These questions and others guiding your market research strategy will help identify an existing need, fill that need and promote the new venture or product," says Karen Goad, agri-food specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Grande Prairie.

Non-traditional crops such as hydroponic greenhouse crops and medicinal plants often don't have established markets or a visible marketing infrastructure. Therefore, the marketing of these niche crops requires more planning, research and personal commitment. Common marketing errors include:

- trying to sell what you can grow, not what you can sell;
- putting a "me too" product on the market. That's a product that isn't differentiated from the competition and doesn't uniquely fill a customer need.
- growing a crop that has limited use or has already achieved market saturation

An Inside Look at Greenhouse Crops, a workshop targeted to new and established greenhouse entrepreneurs, will help you start your research. Whether you're just considering becoming involved in the industry, contemplating market expansion or simply looking to diversify a product mix, this session is a terrific opportunity to gather information and expand your industry contacts. Loans officer, Sebastian Deis of Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, Lending Division and Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse specialist with Alberta Agriculture, will discuss:

- financial considerations for the greenhouse industry
- starting a greenhouse business
- hydroponic production and management
- diversified crop production

Bring your questions and learn from specialists and industry representatives. ***An Inside Look at Greenhouse Crops*** is a half-day workshop being held on April 27, 2000 from 1:00 to 4:30 pm in Grande Prairie. The registration deadline is April 20, 2000. Call (780) 538-5285 for further information. For toll free access, dial 310-0000 and follow the prompts.

Contact: *Karen Goad*
(780) 538-5285

Staff changes in Pest Prevention and Management Unit

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development recently made some changes in the Pest Prevention and Management Unit of Plant Industry Division. The staff changes come on the heels of the secondments of Walter Yarish and Mike Dolinski to the Department's new biotechnology and organic initiatives, respectively. All changes are effective immediately.

"Alberta farmers need to know who to contact when they have questions," says Shaffeek Ali, acting leader of Pest Prevention and Management, Edmonton. "Alberta Agriculture staff are, as always, ready to help and answer questions. There may now just be some new names attached to areas of speciality."

Some of the staffing changes include:

Shaffeek Ali will be the Acting Leader of the Unit. In addition to the Unit leadership duties, Ali will maintain his responsibilities for the *Blue Book*, administration of the Weed and Pest Acts and leadership of the provincial restricted and special weed programs.

Dr. Lloyd Dosdall will handle the entomology component of the Unit. Duties include handling Alberta Agriculture's responses to the insect pest outbreaks that threaten the profitable production of field crops, working with Alberta Agriculture field specialists, industry, Agricultural Fieldmen and researchers to develop response plans to manage insect pest outbreaks. In addition, Dosdall will retain his research responsibilities.

John Bourne will continue as project leader for the Provincial Rat and Rodent Control Program out of Vermilion. Bourne will also be working in partnership with the Animal Industry Division in delivering the coyote management program for northeastern Alberta.

Lorraine Harrison will maintain the Plant Pathology component out of the Beaverlodge Research Centre. Harrison will be working with Research Centre Staff to develop Integrated Pest management programs. She will also be the lead in the Provincial Fusarium Head Blight Control Program.

Janet Feddes-Calpas will continue as project leader for the Dutch Elm Disease Eradication Program. Feddes-Calpas works out of the Brooks office.

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In addition to the above, several Alberta Agriculture field specialists and Agricultural Fieldmen will be working in teams with involved Unit staff to deliver various programs, as well as playing a significant role in monitoring programs.

For further information, contact : Ali at (780) 422-4909; Dosdall at (780) 422-4911; Bourne at (780) 853-8225; Harrison at (780) 354-5153; and, Feddes-Calpas at (403) 362-1337.

Contact: Shaffeek Ali
(780) 422-4909

What's new in agriculture ventures

Many farmers are looking for new ventures to generate additional income, to involve other family members in farm activities or to better use resources. Others are looking at non-traditional enterprises as a way to get started in commercial farming or to help support a rural lifestyle.

"A new series of factsheets has been designed to help Albertans evaluate the feasibility of a new agricultural or rural-based business," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist - business, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Westlock. "The worksheets are very helpful in personalizing information."

The factsheets include:

Personal and Family Considerations – *where do you want to be?... "I don't like gardening!"* This factsheet helps you evaluate your most critical assets: you and your family. It contains checklists and self-tests to assess limitations and opportunities related to business skills. The activities help identify the needs and lifestyle preferences of the entire family. The second part asks you to identify specific goals and objectives that you and your family would like the new enterprise to fulfil.

Identifying Alternatives – *What are the possibilities?... "Hemp or milk goats?"* Once you and your family have identified criteria to sort good enterprise ideas from poor ones, you need to brain storm some enterprise ideas. The resource inventory worksheets and idea evaluation chart help to identify suitable enterprise ideas to help you decide which one would make the best use of your situation

Marketing – ***Will it Sell?****..."Who will buy the stuff?"* Before begining a new enterprise, you need to understand your market. To fully understand the market you need to know who will buy your product or use your service, how to sell to buyers, the amount they want to buy and the right price. Good marketing skill are especially important for new or unusual enterprises. This factsheet addresses the basic research skills needed to evaluate the market for a new enterprise.

Production Requirements – *Do you have the resources?... "Reality check .. Can we do it?"* Producers need more information on production related requirements. Some problems may be overcome by a sufficient input of labor, capital or ingenuity, but other problems may require resources or present challenges that are more than you want to tackle. This factsheet includes production-related worksheets that are designed to help you judge the feasibility of producing a product or providing a service

Profitability – another title in the series being added soon

For copies of these free factsheets, visit an Alberta Agriculture Regional Advisory Services district office or the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: Kerry Engel
(780) 349-4465

4-H'ers choose career paths

Today's workforce is a changing one that often leaves young people faced with harsh realities; increased competition, fewer jobs, higher mandatory skill and education requirements. Young people must make all the right choices early in order to gain an edge.

"4-H is committed to giving its young people that competitive edge and provides training through its National 4-H Careers Conference to achieve this goal," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie.

Erin Hay from Gwynne was the Alberta delegate to the National 4-H Careers Conference, March 29 - April 2, 2000 in Winnipeg. The conference used industry tours, workshops and speaker presentations to encourage 4-H members to explore and carefully consider the various career opportunities available to them, both in the agriculture sector and other industries.

Hay, a member of the Coal Lake 4-H Multi Club, spent a few days with her host family in St. Malo, Manitoba. She then joined 44 other delegates in panel discussions examining career choices and workshops on entrepreneurship and job preparation skills.

"The delegates had the opportunity to put their knowledge into practice as they participated in mock interviews, vying for real jobs with real employers," adds Stark.

Keynote speaker Michelle Sawatsky addressed the issue *Making the most of the Choices you Make*. Other presenters included Marijka Vonderbank, from the University of Manitoba Career Planning and Placement, who assisted members with their job preparation skills. Nick Iafolla, of Iafolla and Associates, who spoke on Building Jobs through Building Businesses. Paul Robson, CEO of Red River Exhibition, addressed delegates at the banquet on Building Skills as a Volunteer

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While in Winnipeg, delegates had the opportunity to visit a variety of learning institutions such as the University of Manitoba and St. Boniface Hospital, as well as businesses that provide career opportunities such as MacDon, Canadian Wheat Board, United Grain Growers, the Royal Bank of Canada and Canadian International Grains Institute. Besides learning, members had fun at Celebrations Dinner Theatre and the 4-H Country Hoe-down.

The success of any 4-H event is largely due to the generous financial assistance provided by its sponsors. Numerous companies and provincial sponsors support National 4-H Careers Conference. Canadian 4-H Council sponsors providing major support for the 2000 conference include: Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Investors Group, Royal Bank of Canada, Pioneer Hi-Bred Limited, Canada Safeway and Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada.

For more information on 4-H call (780) 422-4H4H or visit the Alberta 4-H web site at **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
(403) 948-8510

Province's best 4-H speaker

Stephanie Godson's speech on the topic ***Genetically Modified Organisms*** earned her the title as Alberta's best 4-H public speaker in 2000.

Godson, a member of the Warner 4-H Beef Club, was one of 14 top 4-H'ers who qualified for the recent competition in Calgary. "All 14 had to speak at a minimum of three levels of competition to reach the provincial finals," says Charles Schoening, provincial 4-H communication development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Each finalist had less than a week to research and prepare a four to six minute speech on the selected topic. Stephanie's speech *Pandora's Box*, plus her impromptu speech on Bill 11 won her first place."

In second place was Dawn Smith from Willingdon 4-H Multi-Club. Meghan Clark from the Calmar Heart of the Country Club received third place honours.

The 2000 Provincial 4-H Public Speaking Finals were sponsored by Agrium. "The speakers all exhibited a high level of skill, poise and self-esteem" says Dick Nichols, communication coordinator with Agrium. "The communication skills the speakers have learned in 4-H will serve them well in their careers and personal lives."

Godson will travel to Toronto in November to compete in the Young Speakers for Agriculture Competition. The agricultural radio program, Agritalk on Q91, will sponsor Godson's travel to Toronto.

For more information on 4-H call (780) 422-4H4H or visit the Alberta 4-H web site at **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

Contact: *Charles Schoening*
(780) 422-4H4H (4444)

Planning to explore organic production?

At first glance organic production seems to have a higher profit potential than traditional crops. What are the real costs? Will the consumer continue to pay premiums for this product? The market, the yields and prices are all considerably different when considering organic production. Like all diversification opportunities, the necessary homework must be done.

Plan ahead - do market research. Starting to market a product after it's grown is not the way to do it. Develop a marketing strategy before you start producing.

Know your customer – who is eating organic food? Are you going to sell direct to the consumer from a market garden, at a farmers' market, to retailers directly, through contracts or to processors? Talk with other producers about their experiences.

Know your regulations – the Canadian Organic Advisory Board Inc. (COAB) was formally established in 1992 as a national, non-profit advisory body to represent the interests of organic production and certification groups across Canada. Through COAB National Standards are currently under review.

There are four organic certifying bodies in Alberta.

- **PROPA** – Marina Buchan, Box 61, Silver Valley, AB T0H 3E0, phone: (780) 351-2115; fax (780) 351-3769
- **OCIA Alberta #1** – Walter Walchuk, 4203 - 121 Street, Edmonton, AB T6J 1Y7, phone/fax (780)434-4123. Walter Walchuk form OCIA will be in Westlock on March 4 at our Exploring Organics workshop.
- **SAA (OCIA Alberta #2)** – Box 1181, Sation M, Calgary, AB T2P 2K9, phone 1-888-561-2555
- **Biological Food Producers Association (OCIA #3)** – George Taylor, Box 989, Vulcan, AB T0L 2B0, phone (403)528-2010 fax (403)528-2015

Get a handle on production methods - many producers prefer to start with a small acreage until production methods have been learned. Talk with other growers in the area. What works in one soil zone won't necessarily work in another. Evaluate the costs of growing organic crops. Weed control is a major issue with organic production. Evaluate possible options by working with a certifying body.

Contact: *Kerry Engel*
(780) 349-4465

Agri-News Briefs

Alberta Beef: The Great Taste of the West

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and the Alberta Cattle Commission have joined forces to update the video ***Alberta Beef – The Great Taste of the West*** This new video tape looks at the province's innovative beef industry through the eyes of a working cattleman, looking at how beef is produced from ranch gate to consumer plate. The story highlights the team effort required to produce world-class beef for local and international markets. All aspects from cattle production to beef processing are revealed: from a production chain and technology of the industry, to food safety practices and environmental stewardship point of view. Copies of the video are available for viewing from the central Multi-Media Library, main floor, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton as well as from the Regional Advisory Service district office libraries. For more information on this and other Alberta Agriculture videos, contact Ken Blackley, information officer, Multi-Media Branch, Communications Division, 7000-113 street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Blackley can also be contacted by phone at (780) 422-3951, or fax (780) 427-2861, or e-mail < **ken.blackley@agric.gov.ab.ca** >. Alberta government phone numbers are toll free in the province by dialling 310-0000 first.

Rural Alberta Showcase 2000

The Bashaw Ag Society is hosting the Rural Alberta Showcase on April 14 and 15, 2000. A workshop, ***Alberta Small Sparks...How to Make a Serious Difference in the World Without Taking Yourself too Seriously*** gives participants a chance to listen to a leading North American speaker, Jeff Bercuvitz, as he presents ideas on how to spark successful community projects. The Showcase also features a trade show with over 100 exhibitors, offering displays on a wide range of creative products and services developed by rural Alberta entrepreneurs. There will also be special entertainment for children, such as, storytellers, clowns, balloon art, crafts and magicians. Special entertainment with a 50s theme is planned for adults at the Friday evening celebration in the Bashaw Community Centre. The weekend event is designed to give Albertans a greater sense of what is possible in rural Alberta communities.

NAWMP

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) has been in operation in Alberta for almost 15 years. While NAWMP targets waterfowl, more than 300,000 hectares of habitat have been restored, protected or enhanced for the benefit of many species of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles, as well as innumerable invertebrate and plant communities. To profile NAWMP's contribution to biological diversity in Alberta landscapes, a newsletter ***Biodiversity Makes It Work*** has been developed. The first issue was distributed in February 2000 and new issues will be produced in the coming months. The newsletter outlines NAWMP's commitment to biodiversity and provides information on activities, management programs, partnerships and research initiatives. For further information on NAWMP, or to receive the ***Biodiversity Makes It Work*** newsletter, contact Brett Calverley, Alberta NAWMP coordinator at (780) 489-2002, Edmonton.

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Agri-News

April 24, 2000

Chair in environmentally sustainable agriculture created at U of A

"Along with economic viability, environmental sustainability is one of the most important issues facing the agriculture industry in the 21st century."

Ty Lund, Minister
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

A new Chair in Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (ESA) will be established at the University of Alberta with the support of the Alberta government.

Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, presented a cheque for $900,000 to University of Alberta President Dr. Rod Fraser on April 19, 2000. The funds will support the Chair over the next six years.

"We have heard that environmental sustainability is a very important issue to Albertans, first through the Growth Summit and now from a number of people who are participating in the Ag Summit 2000 process," says Lund. "Alberta farmers have always been good stewards of the land, but with the rapid rate of change in technology today, the more informed and connected farmers can be to research, the better."

The recommendation to create the ESA Chair position came from the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) Council. The Council, made up of members from industry and government, oversees the province's ESA program. The Chair will work closely with the AESA Council.

The primary responsibilities of the Chair include:

- research that will proactively address the affects of agricultural practices on the environment and our natural resources,
- ensuring research information is passed on to the agricultural sector,
- integrating environmental sustainability with existing programs and courses at the University, and,
- training new agriculture graduates in sustainable agricultural systems.

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"The U of A welcomes this kind of strategic alliance and the partnerships we will be able to forge with the new Chair," said Dr. Fraser. "The connection the Chair will create between the agriculture industry and the research community will benefit both."

Contact: Ty Lund, Minister
Alberta Agriculture, Food and
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*(780) 427-2137**

Dr. Ian Morrison, Dean
Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics
University of Alberta
(780) 492-4931

* *Government numbers are toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000*

Province commits $1 million for U of A feed research centre

The Alberta government has committed up to $1 million in funding for the development of a livestock feed research centre at the University of Alberta.

Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, made the announcement at a news conference on April 19, 2000 with University of Alberta President Dr. Rod Fraser.

"I am very pleased that we are again able to enter into a partnership with the University of Alberta that will benefit researchers and the agriculture industry," Lund says. "This concept is a great way to link up the needs of the research community and those in the livestock industry in a way that will let us take advantage of the fast-pace of development in technology."

The cost to establish the centre, called the Alberta Feed Research Institute, is estimated at $2.5 million. Development of the Institute will occur in stages, the first being development of a strategic plan in consultation with industry.

"The vision of the Institute is to provide excellence in feed technologies and evaluation," says University President Dr. Rod Fraser. "It helps keep Alberta in forefront of development of new technology and in the transfer of that knowledge to industry."

The Institute's purpose is to:

- allow plant breeders and nutritionists to work together on improving the nutritional quality of feeds for livestock,
- develop measures and tests to define quality of feed and feed-industry by-products as they relate to animal performance,
- provide an opportunity for industry and researchers to evaluate feed additives, storage and processing methods,
- create a focal point for the development of new feed evaluation technologies,
- support the commercialization and transfer of technology to industry, and
- support training in technology and research.

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(780) 492-4931

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Canadian Cattle Identification Program start-up date

The Board of Directors of the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) has announced the official start-up date for the Canadian Cattle Identification Program. The Program will begin as targeted on December 31, 2000 however monetary penalties will not be applied until July 1, 2002. Until that time enforcement will take the form of education and awareness. Enforcement will be provided by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

"We have listened to producers and believe that the revised schedule will accommodate most of their recommendations and concerns," says Canadian Cattle Identification Agency board chair Carl Block, a cow-calf producer from Abbey, Saskatchewan.

Beginning on July 1, 2001, all cattle that have moved beyond their herd of origin are to be tagged with an official CCIA tag. On that date packing plants will be required to read all tags and transfer the identification to the point of carcass inspection.

"The Canadian Cattle Identification Program begins on January 1, 2001," adds Block. "Cattle that leave their herd of origin after that date are to be tagged. However, the Board has determined that enforcement must take the form of information, extension and notification of non-compliance in the early stages. This period of time should enable producers to adjust and adapt to this important new measure.

"We strongly urge producers to begin tagging their animals. Many have already started tagging voluntarily, and in light of recent developments around the world, the sooner we have the majority of Canadian cattle tagged the better. Recently,

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Denmark lost its ability to export cattle and beef because of the discovery of a domestically-raised cow with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. Also, in the past few weeks, there has been a confirmed outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in both Japan and Korea, closing their borders to exports.

Right now, Canada can claim the healthiest cattle industry in the world, but we have no guarantee what tomorrow may bring. The current health status was reached through deliberate disease eradication programs backed up by individual animal identification. All cattle producers are urged to support this program so that the industry may protect itself, its markets, its consumers and the producer's bottom line.

The CCIA, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, and provincial cattle organizations have renewed their commitment to communication with grassroots producers to ensure industry-wide understanding and support in the period leading up to Program implementation.

The Canadian Cattle Identification Program is a new system of individually identifying cattle in Canada with a CCIA-approved ear tag. Individual identification allows for faster and more efficient traceback and control of disease and serious safety problems, helping to protect Canada's markets for cattle and beef. The Program has been developed at the request of the cattle industry through provincial cattle associations, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Canadian Beef Breeds Council.

For further information, contact the Alberta Cattle Commission or CCIA at 230, 6715 - 8th St. NE, Calgary AB, T2E 7H7; phone (403) 275-2083; fax (403) 275-1668; or visit the CCIA internet site at <**www.cattle.ca/ccia**>. CCIA can also be contacted toll free 1-877-909-BEEF (2333).

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Chair, CCIA
(306) 689-2575

Julie Stitt
General Manager, CCIA
(403) 275-2083

Cindy McCreath
Communications Manager, CCIA
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mccreathc@cattle.ca

Harvesting the Stars

Harvesting the Stars is a musical comedy stage presentation written and performed by the Stony Plain Heritage Agricultural Society Multi Youth Productions, a volunteer theatre troupe. On April 29, 2000, for the first time, the production can be seen on television.

"Multi Youth Productions is a group of teenagers, aged 12 to 18 years from Parkland County, Spruce Grove and Stony Plain," says Cindy Dixon, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Ag in the Classroom Program. "***Harvesting the Stars*** takes a look at family traditions, pioneer values, economic pressures and modern science, all influences that affect Alberta farms and Alberta farm families.

The project began in 1998 and Alberta Agriculture's *Ag in the Classroom* was pleased to provide resource information and support for project development. The hard work done by the troupe has resulted in a very entertaining musical drama that accurately and sensitively portrays some of the challenges facing farm families. The troupe has creatively crafted a tale that includes glimpses of high-tech agricultural innovations, animal welfare issues and the importance of agriculture in our society.

"***Harvesting the Stars*** has been performed to audiences 26 times, including three performances at the Edmonton Klondike Days and six performances at the Edmonton Fringe Festival," adds Dixon. "This is the debut of the presentation on television and well worth watching. These young people have a lot of deserved pride in their production."

The one-hour broadcast of ***Harvesting the Stars*** airs on April 29, 2000 at 7:00 p.m. on ITV – Edmonton and Calgary – Channel 7.

The troupe hopes to attract additional sponsorship so that ***Harvesting the Stars*** can be broadcast across the Prairies.

Contact: *Cindy Dixon*
(780) 427-4311

Spring Credit Advance Program

Under the federal Spring Credit Advance Program, a maximum of $20,000 is available interest-free for spring seeding costs. The maximum advance applies to all crops currently covered under the fall advance program, and applies to all farming operations the farmer is involved in.

The Canadian Wheat Board will administer all wheat, durum and barley advances, the Canadian Canola Growers Association will administer the advance for canola, flax, oats and rye and the Manitoba Corn Growers Association will administer the advance for pulses.

"A qualifying requirement of the program is to have provincial crop insurance coverage," says Neil Blue, market specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Vermilion. "The advance will be based on yield (seeded acres x insurance yield guarantee/acre) provided by the producer's crop insurance multiplied by the advance rate authorized by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. For example, the advance rate for wheat is $65/tonne and for barley is $40/tonne."

The deadline for crop insurance applications for Alberta farmers is April 30, 2000. Application forms for the Spring Credit Advance program are available at local grain elevators. Advances will be issued by cash ticket at the elevator in two

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payments with 60 per cent issued at the time of application and the remaining 40 per cent after seeding, upon completion of a Crop Insurance Seeded Acreage Report.

Any monies advanced under the Spring Program not repaid by the time of applying for a fall advance will reduce monies available under the Fall Advance program. Any Spring Advance program funds owing at December 31, 2000 will be rolled into the Fall Advance program.

Contact: *Neil BlueNumber*
(780) 853-8101

CWB Information
1-800 - ASK-4CWB (1-800-275-4292)

Extending the grazing season

Production costs are always an issue in a cow-calf operation and winter feed, bedding and pasture are among the highest variable costs incurred. Attempts to reduce the winter feeds and to improve the pasture resources can improve the bottom line in producing beef. Many cow-calf producers reduce winter feed costs by extending their grazing season.

"Research results from the 1998 Cow-Calf Enterprise Analysis, compiled by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's production economics and statistics branch compiled for the Aspen Parkland Region, showed that 62.9 per cent of the variable costs in the cow-calf business came from winter feed, bedding and pasture," says Bill Grabowsky, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Wetaskiwin.

The Western Forage and Beef Group, working out of the Lacombe Research Station, indicate that the benefits of extending the grazing season can be both monetary and physical. With extended grazing, producers can reduced feed costs of 25 cents per head per day over stored feed and reduced costs of not handling feed or manure of 15 cents per head per day. Grazing also enhances cow condition prior to entering the winter period and the improved calf weaning weights.

"Extending the grazing season can be accomplished by several management changes," adds Grabowsky. "It might involve a simple rotational grazing plan. It might involve adding legumes to the grass mix, since legumes are a higher quality forage species. Some producers use spring seeded annuals, like oats, and underseed this crop to a winter annual, like triticale. The spring annuals, once removed in late summer, allow for the winter annual to produce late fall grazing opportunities for the cattle.

"Some producers use cereal swaths to graze into late fall and early winter. Some even stockpile perennial forages for a late fall grazing period or even carry it over into early spring from grazing or calving on. Certain perennial grasses produce different growing patterns over the yearly grazing period. For example, Russian Wildrye grows better in the August to November period."

For producers interested in learning more about grazing cattle and extending the grazing period, the Western Forage/Beef Group is conducting its annual three-day pasture school on June 13 - 15, 200000 at Lacombe. The school has been sold out the last two years, so early registration is advised. To register call (403)782-8030.

Contact: *Bill Grabowsky*
(780) 361-1240

4-H'er travels to Washington, D.C.

Alberta 4-H member Jonathon Dowell from Carstairs joined nine other senior 4-H members from across Canada and travelled to the 70Th National 4-H Career Conference in Washington, D.C., April 6 - 15, 2000.

The conference brought together 320 delegates from across the United States as well as our Canadian contingent and other international guests. The theme of this year's event was *Building a Global Community Piece by Piece* and the focus, as in the past, was to help chart the future of the 4-H program.

"The conference is not a workshop where delegates are taught but is described as a 'working conference' that encourages delegates to work together to develop recommendations for change," says Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie. "They also consider innovative ideas and approaches that will improve the direction of the overall 4-H program and make 4-H better for future generations."

Delegates participated in consulting group sessions, working on issues facing youth and the 4-H program such as Citizenship in Action, Youth Heroes and Role Models, World Hunger, Community Violence, Diversity, Environmentalism, Volunteerism and other areas of concern. Delegates also visited the Canadian Embassy and other points of historical and political interest around Washington, including Capitol Hill. Prior to their U.S. experience, Canadian delegates assembled in Ottawa for an orientation and a ceremony at a Citizenship Court.

Canadian participation in this prestigious U.S. conference has been fully funded by the Semex Alliance since 1987.

For more information on 4-H, call (780) 422-4H4H
or visit the Alberta 4-H web site at
<**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h**>.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
(403) 948-8510

Agri-News Briefs

Beef event in UK

The National Beef Association (U.K.) are holding a one-day mega beef event, ***Beef 2000***, on June 29, 2000. Demonstrations planned for the event include gate to plate, cattle to cooking and a series of exhibits promoting the U.K. beef industry. The event is being opened by Prosper de Winne, head of the European Commission's beef administration centre. The event, designed to show the U.K. beef industry how to take the industry forward, will be held at Dunsa Farm, Chatsworth, near Chesterfield in Derbyshire. Timing of the event three days before the English Royal Show on July 3, provides visitors the opportunity to attend both events. The English Royal Show is a three-day event that is considered the crown of the general agricultural calendar. For more information, check out the ***Beef 2000*** website at **<http://www.beef2000.co.uk/>**.

Weed management in tree nurseries

A new Agri-Facts factsheet has been developed by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, ***Weed Management in Tree Nurseries*** (Agdex 275/641-1). It includes information on preventative measures and lists registered herbicides for planning a weed control program in tree nurseries. Information about herbicide selectivity, soil versus foliar activity and steps for planning a weed control program with herbicides is also included. For a copy of this free factsheet, visit an Alberta Agriculture district office or the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. This factsheet can also be obtained electronically on the Alberta Agriculture internet site at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/200/freedex.html#ornamental>**.

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Agri-News

May 1, 2000

Province supports U of A studies of beef cattle metabolism

The Alberta cow-calf and feedlot sectors directly benefit from pioneering beef metabolism research at the U of A. The research is supported by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the Canada-Alberta Beef Industry Development Fund and Alberta Research Council.

Animal scientists at the U of A are studying the energy and protein metabolism of beef cattle to gain a better understanding of:

- individual differences in feed requirements and how they are related to the animal's genetics;
- interactions of diet protein and energy to optimize growth while minimizing environmental impacts from factors such as methane and nutrient excretion; and
- environmental factors that can stress cattle including climate and environmental pollutants.

"This team at the U of A is at the forefront of research on energy metabolism in beef cattle," says U of A animal physiologist Dr. Bob Christopherson. "The combination of expertise at the U of A is unique for conducting these kinds of studies."

On April 19, 2000, Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development presented a cheque for $130,600 to the U of A for enhancement of the beef research facilities at the Environmental and Metabolism Research Centre.

"This is a fine example of the relationship between the University of Alberta, Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Research Council in addressing issues of concern to Albertans," says Dr. Ian Morrison, Dean of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics at the U of A.

"The government and Alberta Agriculture appreciate the value of the research done at the U of A," says Lund. "Enhancing the Centre provides scientists with the opportunity for world class research that will ultimately benefit our livestock industry."

The expansion will allow the University and province to devote more effort to leading edge research including beef genomics, forage and grain quality, cold stress, metabolism, environmental toxicology, molecular biology and meat quality.

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The U of A beef cattle metabolism team includes Drs. Bob Christopherson, Gary Mathison, Walter Dixon, Stephen Moore, Vicki Baracos. The team works in close collaboration with Dr. Erasmus Okine and John Basarab of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Dr. Bob Coppock of the Alberta Research Council.

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* Alberta government numbers are toll free in the province by dialing 310-0000

What's new under glass?

In September 1999, the International Conference and British-Israeli Workshop was held in Haifa, Israel. The conference was held in conjunction with the Agritech trade show, the 14th International Agricultural Exhibition in Haifa.

"The greenhouse techniques conference was attended by over 100 scientists from 30 countries," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN), Edmonton and one of the conference presenters. "The focus was on greenhouse environmental controls, new irrigation and water recycling techniques, new glazing materials, transpiration and evaporation, greenhouse management and economy and energy and the sustainability of greenhouses."

A few of the highlights from the conference include:

New dehumidification system for greenhouses – this system is still in the experimental stages. The system is located on the floor and a heat pump is used to transform latent heat into sensible heat. The system causes warm, humid air to come into contact with a cold surface, causing condensation, then the dehumidified air touches a warm surface and flows back into the greenhouse.

Development of a microwave system for greenhouse heating – a 500 watts microwave generator was used to heat mature tomato and pepper plants. The results showed that it is possible to heat the plants with microwave without visible damage and no increased susceptibility to gray mold. The energy required for microwave heating was about 0.55 per cent of that required by hot air heating.

New spectrally modifying plastics – these new plastics have been tested for commercial use. These plastics on the roof of the greenhouse can control plant height through the regulation of blue and far red regions of the spectrum. Colored shade nets can manipulate the vegetative growth of ornamental plants. Red net will have a pronounced stimulation on the over-all vegetative growth. Blue net can be used for dwarfing of plants. Grey net can markedly enhance branching, producing a bushy plant. Reflective thermal net can enhance side branching in Pittosporum.

Color manipulation also was found to be effective in controlling some pests. The fungus Botrytis need UV light, between 320 to 400 nm, to sporulate. Cutting the UV intensity can help control this fungus. UV filters were also found to be highly effective in the control of thrips and whiteflies.

"The greenhouse industry in Canada is growing each year," adds Mirza. "Alberta currently has 212 acres under cover, 12 acres of tomatoes, 52 acres of cucumbers, 8 acres of peppers, and 140 acres of ornamental plants and flowers."

Contact: *Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza*
(780) 422-1789

WorldOrganics 2000

World trade in organic products is booming. The sector is becoming a major part of the overall food market and demand for organic products is far outstripping supply. WorldOrganics 2000 is the first major international conference on the organic market and is a unique opportunity to examine the growth and expansion of organic foods, exchange views, and meet industry colleagues from around the world. The conference is being held in London, England on May 9 and 10, 2000.

"WorldOrganics 2000 will look in detail at the growth of organic food markets worldwide with case studies on the U.K., U.S., Denmark, Japan and Thailand," says Mike Dolinski, organic specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and WorldOrganics 2000 conference chair. "Other areas of interest on the agenda include: the Organic Future for Pork & Poultry, Dairy, Sugar, Fruit & Vegetables; Labelling and Certification Procedures for Organic Foods; Responding to Consumer Demands; Organics and GM Issues; and, E-Commerce - Organics On-line. A conference segment on Policy and Regulatory Environment for Organics Around the World will bring attendees up to date on how the different worldwide regulatory procedures and definitions of organics can be harmonized to eliminate trade barriers to organic foods."

Conference speakers include: Joanne Johnston, World Organics Commodity Exchange, U.K.; Helen Browning, Eastbrook Farm, Soil Association, U.K.; Dr. Carlo Leifert, Aberdeen University Centre for Organic Agriculture, U.K.; Jim Riddle, International Organization of Organic Inspectors, U.S.; Fumiko Masuda, Organic Bank of Japan; Rudy Kortbech Oelsen, International Trade Centre, Switzerland; Peter Bradford, Freshlands, U.K.; Hanspeter Schmidt, AGOL, Germany; and, Ane Mette Arve, Danish Dairy Board, Denmark.

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"Alberta's organic growers and producers looking at organic production as an alternative are poised to take advantage of this growing worldwide organic market," adds Dolinski. "This conference will be an excellent opportunity to learn about the market, find out about the regulations and organic policies in other countries and meet producers, processors and retailers in the global organic market."

Those interested in Agra Europe can visit their website at **<www.agra-food-news.com>**.

For more information, or to register for the conference, contact Agra Europe (London) Ltd., 80 Calverley Road, Turnbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 2UN UK, phone + 44 (0) 1892 511807, fax +44 (0) 1892 527758, or e-mail **<conferences@agra-europe.com>**. Cost of the conference is £ 846 per single delegate; £ 728.50 per person – group rate; £ 440.63 per person – educational rate.

Contact: Mike Dolinski
(780) 422-4873

Timothy for export – great potential, some risk

Export Timothy is an expanding market and the double-compressed, dehydrating hay industry is adding value to a domestic forage crop.

"The current export market has a preference for long-fibre forages such as timothy, and producer prices for high-quality timothy continues to be strong," says Tracy Dow, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Taber. "What seems to be the one most limiting factor to increasing exports in this market is an adequate supply of product that meets strict export requirements."

Good fertility management and abundant moisture are two critical factors in maximizing yields for timothy. Due to the high moisture requirements, timothy isn't considered a viable crop in all areas of the province and is not widely recommended for the dryland areas of the Brown and Dark Brown soil zones.

"The Timothy Cost and Return Study conducted by Alberta Agriculture's Production Economics (funded in part by Foothills Forage Co-op Association and the Canadian Hay Association), indicates that timothy has the potential for good producer returns as a cash hay crop under irrigation (Brown/Dark Brown soil zones) and in the Black soil zone," says Dow.

The ***2000 Cropping Alternatives*** (projections for different crops) are available from all Alberta Agriculture district offices and can be viewed on the Alberta Agriculture internet site at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economics/production economics/crops>**.

"The cost and return information can be used by producers to compare their operations with the 'group average'," adds Dow. "It is also something that potential timothy growers can use when considering export timothy as a viable crop alternative for their operation. Producers are advised to use caution when making comparisons and remember that the numbers in the Cropping Alternatives are group averages

There are some significant risks associated with producing timothy with the quality that meets export needs. The ideal situation is that all the timothy produced would grade as #1 export. However, the reality is producers may have to settle for a combination of several grades due to: poor color, small heads, weather damage at harvest, contamination from weeds and other crops, or a high percentage of brown leaf instead of good green color and small heads. The market prices used in the crop projections are a blended price and assumes a mix of grades at different prices.

"A very critical situation arises when an off-grade product is produced. A crop that doesn't meet export quality means it has to be marketed to domestic livestock," says Dow. "For the export market, timothy has to be high in fibre, not contaminated with weeds or other volunteer crops and have a good green color. The crop is harvested at a late stage in maturity and baled at 10 to 12 per cent moisture. Mature timothy is very susceptible to weather damage at harvest and significant color change can occur with even a minimal amount of untimely rain."

The biggest challenge facing the industry is what to do with the off-grade material. Protein levels on mature timothy is low, and exactly how low depends on the stage of maturity when it is cut. Fibre levels will be high, palatability and voluntary intake will be poor. This off grade material has limited use in livestock feeding programs, but could have some value for wintering beef cows. Some form of mechanical processing and feeding as a total mixed ration may be required to increase voluntary intake. It may also require some supplementation to meet the nutrient requirements of the livestock being fed. When other alternative forages are in good supply, it can be hard to market off-grade timothy and it will be priced significantly lower than if it had made export quality.

"With good management, producers can deal with the majority of the risks involved in growing timothy for export," says Dow. "Indications are that top quality timothy has good export market potential and, as always, the highest grades will be the easiest to market and bring the highest prices."

Contact: Tracy Dow
(403) 223-7907

Choosing barley varieties for disease resistance

Scald and net blotch are the most common barley diseases. Both fungi overwinter on barley stubble and usually occur together. Septoria compllex, viral and fungal strip, gray speck and barley yellow dwarf virus can also appear in barley but are usually of less economic significance.

"Genetic resistance to scald and net blotch is lacking in many of the recommended varieties of barley," says Wendy Schatz, crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Claresholm. "Barley varieties with moderate levels of resistance are starting to show a resistance breakdown. This is due to the continued use of one variety resulting in the evolution of the diseases to more virulent races. For example, CDC Earl used to have some resistance to scald, but because of its overuse, it has become more susceptible. AC Lacombe is also starting to show a breakdown of its moderate resistance to net blotch."

It is important to monitor the disease resistance performance of a variety. If a susceptible variety is to be grown, it should be planted in a field where the previous crop was not barley. If barley is to be grown in the same field in consecutive years, plant a variety that has the best resistance package or rotate the barley varieties being grown.

"Disease resistance is not forever," says Schatz. "Fungi are part of nature and will evolve to survive. It is advisable to use a combination of strategies involving tools such as variety choice, crop rotation, seed quality, seed treatment, balanced fertility, in-crop fungicide application and field scouting to help reduce the disease potential."

Contact: *Wendy Schatz*
(403) 625-1445

Chem fallow for the brown soils

Timing of spring chemical application in fallow operations is important. If applications of Roundup or other glyphosate products are left too late in the spring, weeds such as foxtail barley and seedling dandelions get a jump on growing and are more difficult to control. Missing the early application window requires higher rates of chemical with a later application, or reduced effectiveness of control. Timing of the first spray operation may then also overlap with seeding. Being prepared and placing priority on getting the job done pays.

To re-enforce this idea, look at narrow leafed hawk's beard. This weed forms a rosette in the fall, much like a dandelion. It is vulnerable to herbicide when it is small and the flat leaves provide an easy target for spray. Once the weed bolts in early summer, it is nearly impossible to kill with Roundup or 2,4-D. A heavier rate of herbicide is required, and the tall, narrow leafed weed is more difficult to target when sprayed.

Trading from tillage to one or two chemical applications saves time, increases efficiency and allows you to manage more acres. A single spray pass can control weeds over a period that would normally require two or more cultivation passes.

Some producers get away with lower rates and water volumes, but unless you are familiar with timing of applications and weed response to your treatments, reducing rates can result in poor weed control.

"There is much to learn when you begin reducing tillage operations and depend on herbicide to decrease weed pressure," says Grant Nelson, reduced tillage agronomist with Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), Stettler. "Talking to a neighbor who has been using the method successfully can really help. Chemical fallow also allows you the opportunity to examine some of the benefits of reduced tillage, without having to lay out large sums of money for equipment."

One important thing to remember is the nitrogen needs for the crop following chemical fallow. Crop residues break down more slowly when left on the surface, especially when the cropping system has not allowed for soil microbe populations to build and cycle. There will be more life in the soil, but this life does tie up nitrogen and other crop nutrients. It may be necessary to apply nitrogen fertilizer to compensate for this. The extra cost of fertilizer will be offset by more available moisture for crops and slow release of nitrogen and other crop nutrients over the growing season, which boosts yields and grain protein.

Keeping tillage implements out of the field during a fallow operation has other benefits, such as reduced soil compaction, increased potential for snow capture by standing stubble over the winter and reduced loss of moisture that occurs each time a tillage operation is used.

"Making an effort to know what your per acre costs are will help you maximize profits and minimize costs," adds Nelson. "Moving from tilled fallow to chemical fallow is a step that can be justified by comparing season long costs of weed control in fallow. Chemical fallow is a tool that can help you realize higher income despite higher fuel cost and lower crop prices."

Tips to maximize benefits of chemical fallow:

- Use herbicides with short residual life in the soil and limited mobility.
- Calibrate your sprayer to ensure that rates applied are close to recommended rates.
- Rotate crops and herbicides to reduce weed pressures and prevent weed resistance.
- Soil test to build a knowledge of how operations effect your soil and its fertility.

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- Keep active records of each field (weed control, herbicides used, crop and yields).
- Fertilizer application pays on the crop after fallow (whether you use tillage or chemical).
- Scout your fields. The time you save by spraying rather than cultivating should be spent monitoring weeds.

Contact: Grant Nelson
(403) 742-7500

Environmental Summer Camp

Alberta 4-H is offering Alberta children aged 9 to 12 an opportunity to share 143 acres with over 100 species of wildlife, explore 65 million year old bedrock and hike through trails of fern glade forest. On August 20 to 24, 2000, the Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle Lake will host the Environmental Summer Camp.

"For more than 20 years, Alberta youth have been coming to camp at the Alberta 4-H Centre," says Danielle McIntyre, program administrator with the 4-H Foundation of Alberta, Edmonton. "The Centre is a year round environmental education facility located one hour southwest of Edmonton. This is a chance for Alberta youths to enjoy a week filled with activities that help them build skills and strengths they never knew they had. Qualified and experienced staff, all with appropriate certification, deliver the program and supervision is provided 24 hours a day."

The Centre provides home cooked meals, hot showers and warm bunks. Its natural lakefront setting is the perfect place to help young people come to an appreciation for the environment. Other activities at the Environmental Summer Camp include: swimming, group games, hiking, creative crafts, leadership skills, canoeing, nature studies, camping skills, archery, campfires and initiative games. It is a great place to find and forge friendships.

"The Alberta 4-H Centre is a safe, clean facility," adds McIntyre. "Staff members are trained and certified in Standard First Aid and CPR."

Registration is open to any child age 9 to 12, including but not restricted to 4-H members. Fee for the program is $159, includes meals, accommodation, instruction and supplies.

For more information, contact the 4-H Foundation of Alberta, 200, 7000 - 113 Street, Emdonton, AB T6H 5T6, phone (780) 427-2541, fax (780) 422-7755, or e-mail McIntyre at <danielle.mcintyre@agric.gov.ab.ca>.

Contact: Danielle McIntyre
(780) 427-2541

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Arbor Day

Arbor Day in Alberta dates back to 1884 when the Council of the Northwest Territories passed a ordinance which allowed the Lieutenant-Governor to designate a day a year as Arbor Day. Since the early 1960s, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has supplied pine or spruce tree seedlings for school children to plant at home to help them realize the importance and beautification value of trees. At that time it was mainly the larger cities that participated in celebrating Arbor Day. In 1989, TransAlta created the *ForEver Green Program* and became partners with Alberta Agriculture in the distribution of the trees to grade three students in the rural municipalities. The program is designed to compliment grade three curriculum and the Teacher Resource Guide includes exercises in language arts, math and science to help explain the importance of sustaining our forests for the future. The Resource Guide can be found at <**www.transalta.com**>. Distribution of trees is during the first week in May, coinciding with Arbor Day, typically celebrated on the first Thursday in the first full week of May. This year, Arbor Day is May 4. For further information, contact Janet Feddes-Calpas, DED program coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, (403) 362-1337, Brooks.

Pasture water systems for livestock

Providing a safe, reliable supply of quality water for livestock is a good management practice. Livestock producers are doing more to protect the natural and constructed water courses from environmental contamination. Direct access to surface water can lead to environmental problems, health problems in the herd and cause poor pasture use. Many trials have been undertaken to determine the benefits of pumping water to cattle versus direct access. The factsheet ***Pasture Water Systems for Livestock*** (Agdex 400/716-3) outlines some of the problems; sites pasture water system trials and their results; discusses benefits and options; and; gives several hauling, storage and pumping alternatives. For a copy of this free factsheet, visit an Alberta Agriculture district office or the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. This factsheet can also be obtained electronically on the Alberta Agriculture internet site at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/400/400_716-3.html**>.

Agri-News

May 8, 2000

Commercial greenhouse construction

Building a commercial greenhouse takes a lot of thinking and planning. Commercial greenhouse construction is on the rise in Alberta and people are getting into a variety of greenhouse crops; vegetable production, bedding plants, tree seedlings and ornamental crops.

"There are many logical aspects of greenhouse planning, construction and operation," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist, Crop Diversification Centre North, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "The very first step is to prepare a business plan that shows what you plan to do and how would you do it."

To prepare the business plan one must have the best possible information. This information includes the status of the existing greenhouse industry, cost of production of major crops, crop scheduling so that you know when cash flow will start and when you just have to pay bills.

"Securing funding for the project is the next step," says Mirza. "A good business plan combined with experience in crop management are two essential starting components."

Financial planning goes hand in hand with crop production. Alberta Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) can help analyze a business plan, identify any deficiencies in planning and can find sources of funding most suited to a business's specific needs.

Based on a very successful Greenhouse Planning and Management Workshop in February 2000, Mirza has put together a summary of different presentations. This document covers the highlights of greenhouse planning and management process. It covers greenhouse planning and construction, computerized environmental controls, economics of greenhouse vegetable production, basic cultural practices and integrated pest management. It is available on the Alberta Agriculture internet website, at: **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/crops/hort/grnhouse gc0002a.html>**. A copy of this publication ***Highlights of Greenhouse Planning and Management Workshop*** and other related greenhouse publications can also be obtained from the CDCN.

Contact: *Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza*
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New Irrigation Districts Act proclaimed

The new Irrigation Districts Act was proclaimed in force on May 1, 2000 along with four regulations governing the operation of Alberta's 13 irrigation districts. The new Act and regulations update the legislation and regulations under the former Irrigation Act, 1980.

The new legislation makes administrative changes that allow irrigation districts to run their day to day operations with less government involvement and also gives the public, particularly those affected by irrigation operations, more involvement. It also updates the legislation and regulations, making them more applicable to the present day.

"The new Act will help Alberta's irrigation districts operate more effectively and allow for greater public input into their operation. The irrigation districts were actively involved in developing both the Act and the regulations," says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister Ty Lund. "Now they will require fewer prior approvals for their day to day operations, but there is also a greater requirement for them to notify any parties that may be affected by their actions."

The Irrigation Districts Act was created after a two-year consultation process held by an MLA committee chaired by Dunvegan MLA Glen Clegg. The consultation included public meetings and written and oral submissions. The Act was passed in the Legislature in the 1999 Spring Session and received Royal Assent April 29, 1999. Regulations under the Act were also developed with input from stakeholders.

Contact: Len Ring
Manager, Irrigation Secretariat
(403) 381-5176

Alberta government numbers are toll free in Alberta by dailing 310-0000

Chemical fallow options for the brown soils

Chemical fallow (Reduced Tillage fallow) is a good option for producers hoping to save on fuel bills and still maintain good weed control during fallow operations. Although continuous cropping is a growing practice throughout the prairies, there are portions of the province where summerfallow is widely used.

Last spring, wet conditions in east central Alberta brought on an increased use of chemical fallow. Unlike tilled fallow, herbicides will kill weeds most effectively when soil conditions are moist and growing conditions are good.

"This spring, another factor will increase the use of chemical and reduced tillage fallow; the cost of fuel," says Grant Nelson, reduced tillage agronomist with Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative, Stettler. "In the spring of 1999, Alberta producers paid 25 cents per litre of diesel fuel. The cost of fuel is now approximately 10 cents higher than in 1999. The fuel savings on an early spring application of Roundup, Rustler, Vantage or other glyphosate products will certainly offset some of the initial cost of herbicide."

To calculate these savings, go to the farm machinery cost calculator on the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development internet site <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca**> and then find and click on 'calculator' on the page. The calculator can be directly accessed a: <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/navigation/toolbar/calculators/index.html**>.

"If you have a 275 Hp tractor and are pulling 41 feet of cultivator over 7000 acres, fuel savings will be more than doubled if you pull a sprayer twice a season over the field rather than cultivating four times," says Nelson. "If currently using a tractor for 600 hours over a growing season, reducing tractor hours to 400 would give a total machinery cost savings of over $6000, using the above scenario and the on-line calculator."

The objective of chemical fallow is to leave the crop residues on the soil surface. Leaving crop residues on the soil surface reduces evaporation and protects the soil from wind and water erosion. Approximately 60 to 80 per cent of the crop residues from the previous year will remain at seeding if chemical fallow is not worked. Crops such as canola have a lower carbon to nitrogen ratio than cereals. These crops break down more rapidly and may be less favorable as the crop prior to chemical fallow.

Soil capillaries increase in zero tilled soils. This is due to increased soil life and natural soil dynamics. The increased channelling in soil allows for greater water infiltration, reducing water erosion and capturing snow run-off in the spring. In dry conditions, these capillaries allow water to evaporate. This would occur only in situations where there was insufficient crop residues to insulate the soil from the dry air above. Working the soil will break the capillaries, but will also remove straw cover. When the rains come, closing soil capillaries with tillage could increase water erosion, because the soil capillaries would no longer allow for effective movement of water into the soil.

Chemicals registered for use in fallow include: Banvel (dicamba), 2,4-D (amine, LV esters), Fortress, Glyfos, Renegade, Victor, Credit, Heritage 5G, Advance 10G, Lorox, Linuron 480 (with Sweep, MCPA), MCPA, Pardner (with Roundup), Rival 10G, Rival EC/DF, Roundup (Transorb, Original, Dry), Rustler, Target, Touchdown, Treflan, Vantage and Vantage Plus.

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"From this list you can plan a strategy to control specific weed problems in a chemical fallow operation," says Nelson "Consult the *Blue Book* (***Crop Protection 2000***, Agdex 606-1) for specific instructions on using these products."

The fallow season begins in the fall. Many producers apply a late fall (October) application of 2,4-D or MCPA to control winter annual weeds. This inexpensive control removes difficult weeds such as narrow leafed hawk's beard from the early spring concern list.

Glyphosate (Roundup, Vantage and others) is the favored active ingredient for chemical fallow used by most Alberta farmers. It does not control all weeds equally, however. Some weeds resist glyphosate due to reduced leaf area (narrow leafed hawk's beard), waxy coating (buckwheat) and leaf position (some quack grass ecotypes). When dealing with harder to manage weeds such as buckwheat, Rustler is favored because of its dicamba component. Use *Blue Book* rates when applying these chemicals.

Contact: Grant Nelson
(403) 742-7500

Resources for special crops growing like weeds in a test plot

At this time of year, many growers are toying with the idea of planting something a little different – *a little test plot, to see how things will grow*.

"As with any new product, market research is just as vital, if not more vital, than production tests," says Kirsty Piquette, pulse and special crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development, St. Paul. "For those investigating special crops, take some time to look over the available resources."

Herbs and Spice Production and Planning CD is an interactive CD Rom that was released this past winter. It includes text and videos from experts and marketers. The CD also allows the grower to start putting together a business plan while working through the information. The CD is broken into several sections. They are:

- the **Production and Marketability** section covers: why diversify, economics of crop production, pitfalls of crop diversification, steps to successful diversification, and new crops in Alberta
- the second section look at the various Varieties of culinary, medicinal and aromatic herbs
- the **Business Plan** sections includes an entrepreneur test, components of a business plan and an interactive portion that allows users to make notes for their business plan
- the **markets and marketing section** look at the three different avenues of selling herbs: direct to the consumer, into retail or as an ingredient

The Herb and Spice Production and Planning Guide CD Rom may be purchased by calling the Alberta Agriculture Publications Office in Edmonton at 1-800-292-5697

Alberta Agriculture's web site for special crops has expanded and is located at

<**www.agric.gov.ab.ca navigation crops special index.html**>. This web site contains a web board to post questions, a directory of buyers and sellers and if applicable, it allows users to add their name to the directory. For more information on diversification check out <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/diversify**>

Association for special crops is up and running. Alberta New Crops Network (ANCN)- provides identity, marketing information, education and networking to its members, for the development of new crops within Alberta. The ANCN is a new organization and vital networking group whose goal will be to offer an organization umbrella for new crop producers, marketers, processors, agri-engineers, researchers and individuals interested in furthering quality standards, information and consumer awareness withing the alternative agricultural industry within Alberta. The ANCN can be contacted at (780) 415-2681.

For more information on special crops in this area, contact Ken Lopetinsky, special crops specialist at (780) 674-8213, Barrhead or the Crop Diversification Centre North at (780) 422-1789, Edmonton. For more information on diversifying call an Alberta Agriculture rural development specialist-business.

Contact: Kirsty Piquette
(780) 645-6301

Government numbers are toll free by dialing 310-0000 first

Back to 4-H Camp

Anyone who ever attended an Alberta 4-H Camp is invited to a weekend filled with camp activities and reminiscing.

"4-H Reunion 2000 is organized by a committee of past 4-H campers. We are looking for any 4-H members, past or present, who have ever attended an Alberta 4-H camp, along with their family, to join in this fun weekend" says Tim Bowman, 4-H alumni member. "The weekend will be informal, so that people can arrive at any point and join in the activities."

The camp will be held at the Alberta 4-H Centre near Westerose, August 24 to 27, 2000. The plan is for participants to renew old friendships and make new ones.

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The weekend will begin with a free evening of accommodation on Thursday for early bird registrants. Friday is a free day for people to explore the 4-H Centre's nature trails, fern glades and scenic Battle Lake. An evening talent show is planned to officially kickoff the weekend. On Saturday, camp activities include canoeing, archery, and crafts. Beef on a bun dinner will be followed by a licensed dance. A campfire will also be available for a sing-along! Sunday's farewells will be said at a pancake breakfast.

"At the age of 10, my parents tried to convince me that 4-H camp would be 'good for me'. I certainly didn't believe them, but went anyway. I developed friendships with people from all over Alberta, gained confidence and had more fun than I ever imagined," says former 4-H'er, Nicol Stone. "Who knew I'd be packing my bags for camp for the next 13 summers."

There is a registration fee of $15 per person for the Reunion Camp due by July 17, 2000. Register before May 31, 2000 and receive $5 off and Thursday night accommodation free. There will also be draws from the early bird registrations for some great prizes.

Dorm or camping accommodation and meals will be available for a fee. In addition, there will be a concession available on Saturday offering hamburgers, hot dogs and assorted other goodies.

For more information call Tim Bowman at (403) 342-2596 or visit the 4-H Reunion 2000 web site at **<http://home.talkcity.com/route66/altacowboy/>**.

Contact: Tim Bowman
(403) 342-2596

Field scouting – a good practice

It is important to know what to look for and why to look for it before setting out to scout your field. Some growing season factors to keep an eye on are weather conditions, potential pest problems in the area and problems occurring outside the immediate area.

"Some problems that occur have a lot to do with spring weather and may depend on when seed will be planted," says Ieuan Evans, plant disease specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Nutrient deficiencies go hand in hand with the weather patterns. Throughout the growing season, farmers will want to keep a close watch on emergence, noting whether it's uniform or sporadic."

Knowing what to look for at the various stages of crop development makes it easier to spot problems early and take appropriate action. From early to mid-June, crops are usually in the tillering stage. It is important to watch for signs of nitrogen, sulphur, phosphorus, potassium, copper, zinc and/or manganese deficiencies.

"Nutrient deficiency symptoms can easily be confused with other common problems so plants must be examined carefully," adds Evans. "Deficiencies in essential nutrients usually appear as leaf chlorosis (blanching or yellowing of leaves) which, if unchecked, progress into necrosis (dead leaves and plants).

"Plants use nutrients in different ways. Depending on which nutrient is lacking, the crop will show specific symptoms that will help identify what is needed. For example, sulphur deficiency in cereals causes yellowing of young leaves with no stress evident in older leaves. On the other hand, when insufficient quantities of nitrogen are available, older (lower) leaves show the signs of deficiency first."

The problem and the crop will determine the options that should be used to correct nutrient deficiencies. Secondary nutrient deficiencies, identified during field scouting, can be arrested but a decline in yield or quality should be expected.

"Early detection is the key to correcting, or at least mitigating, nutrient deficiencies," says Evans. "It takes some effort and consistent scouting to stay on top of the problems that can affect your yield. Scouting regularly is one of the activities that can keep farmers ahead of problems, whether with nutrient deficiencies, plant disease, insect problems, weed infestation, compaction or nonperformance of agri-chemical applications."

Support material on field scouting is available from Alberta Agriculture. Videos, including a diagnostic video, ***Outstanding in your field***, and a procedures video, ***Field scouting***, can be borrowed from your local agriculture office or from the Multi-Media library, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6, or by calling (403)422-3951. Videos that deal specifically with identifying sclerotinia and blackleg (canola) are also available.

Publications, such as the ***Green Book, A Practical Guide to Crop Protection***, the ***Blue Book*** and ***Backyard Pest Management***, are also available for purchase from the Publishing Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6.

Contact: Ieuan Evans
(403)427-7098

Agri-News Briefs

Pasture School

The Western Forage Beef Group is holding its Pasture School on June 13 to 15, 2000, in Lacombe. A variety of topics will be covered in seminars and field sessions during the three-day school, including: pasture planning; grass and legume growth and development; managing pasture production; grazing nutrition; pasture fertility and nutrient cycling; pasture species; alfalfa grazing; pasture rejuvenation; and, economics of a grazing operation. The presentations made by graziers, consultants, forage and beef researchers, and extension specialists, provide an opportunity for Albertans already practicing grazing management to learn more. Attendance is limited, and early registration is recommended. Registration is $310 for one person and $200 for each additional person from the same farm/ranch. For more information, or to register, contact Cathy Hendrickson (403) 782-8030 or Grant Lastiwka (403) 782-6120, Lacombe. Government numbers are toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000.

2000 Alberta Horticulture Congress

The Alberta Horticultural Congress is presenting David Irvine as this year's 2000 Keynote speaker. Irvine is the best selling author of ***Simple Living in a Complex World*** and ***Accountability: Getting a Grip on Results***. The Alberta Hort Congress and Prairie West Trade Show will be held at the Mayfield Inn, November 9 to 11, 2000. For more information, contact Shirley Alton at (780) 415-2324.

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May 15, 2000

Pumping water into dugouts is a huge job this year

Winter precipitation for 1999/2000 measured *below normal* to *much below normal* in many areas of the province. This resulted in many surface water supplies and sources being low this spring, even after the spring snow melt.

"Soil moisture is low in many areas and there hasn't been significant runoff," says Murray Tenove, water quality engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "Dugouts usually rely on spring runoff to supply the water needed to fill them. Even if there are heavy snows in the spring, the resulting melt water often doesn't make it into dugouts because warmer ground temperatures allow the moisture to enter the ground. This can be good for low soil moisture conditions and provide water for crops, but can still be a problem for surface water supplies."

For the majority of agricultural producers, especially livestock producers that rely on surface water, this type of spring can be difficult and require some critical decision making. For producers who are not provided water from a community pipeline or irrigation infrastructure, it may mean moving cattle to the limited existing water supplies or reducing herd sizes. However, for many producers and rural residents the water supply needs to be located in a certain area for equipment, facility, labor and security reasons. For some smaller sized operations truck water hauling can provide some short-term relief.

"The transfer of bulk supplies of surface water from other manmade water supplies or natural water bodies needs to be done as efficiently as possible and often requires specialized equipment," says Tenove. "To assist producers in this situation, the Alberta government has provided an Emergency Water Pumping Program through Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development since 1976. This program allows producers to rent large volume pumps and pipe for a nominal cost. When the equipment is delivered, the producer has to have things such as labor to assemble the pipe, a tractor to power the pump, ready and on site. An acceptable route must have been chosen and, most importantly, an accepted source to pump the water from."

The water source requirement will be tricky this year because producers are having to pump longer distances, some jobs

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Alberta

ranging up to 8 miles. This takes extra equipment and coordination. The Alberta government is helping out this year and has invested approximately $2 million to expand the Alberta Agriculture fleet of 70 units by approximately one third. Until this new equipment can hit the road, Alberta Environment has helped out on some of the large pumping projects, loaning high capacity equipment normally used for municipal situations. Also, to make the equipment more affordable to agricultural producers, the Alberta Government has cut the standard rental rates in half for the year 2000.

But bigger projects don't just mean more equipment. They often depend on community effort and compromise. The willingness of rural residents to help each other out when needed has been exceptional this year and there are numerous examples of this. Bob Buchanan, an Alberta Agriculture water specialist, has been working with some of these groups.

"The Black Bear Grazing Reserve took on a big project north of Westlock," says Buchanan. "The farmer members worked together to pump 20 dugouts and 20 million gallons of water. The project involved pumping water from a neighboring lake through the temporary eight-mile long pipeline. The pipeline had to be moved two or three times to supply water to all the dugouts scattered over approximately a half a township of pasture land. The pumps ran continuously for two weeks. Then it was on to Hazel Bluff, west of Westlock, where a group of five farmers are pumping approximately seven million gallons of water six miles to fill farm dugouts from the Pembina River."

Both these examples of community effort were drawing water from a crown water body so a **temporary diversion license** from Alberta Environment was required. Sometimes deciding on the acceptability of these projects is not straight forward, so individuals or groups requiring such a license need to contact Alberta Environment early enough to ensure everything is in order when the equipment is delivered.

"If suitable water sources are available, we can expect even more pumping projects than the past two busy years. In 1998 and 1999 approximately 900 projects were handled each year," says Tenove. "As of May 4th there were already 182 projects that have been pumped or are planned to be started soon. Even with the extra equipment coming on this year, the typical demand for equipment access in the fall could overtax the supply. This means that projects that can be done over the summer should be attempted. Alberta Agriculture staff need to know the regional demand throughout the year so that resources can be shifted as needed. Even if you're not planning to rent the equipment until fall, contact Alberta Agriculture as soon as possible so they can get you on the list."

Contact: Murray Tenove
(780) 427-4182

Understanding bluegrass and beef

Many acres of old perennial pastures in the parkland region of Alberta contain a high percentage of naturalized Kentucky Bluegrass (KBG) and White Clover (WC). These species are well adapted to close, frequent grazing in the parkland climate and persist under heavy grazing pressure and low fertility.

"As better pasture management techniques are adopted by grazing managers, it has been observed that these old KBG/WC stands respond well to fertility and improved grazing management," says Lorne Erickson, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Rimbey. "In fact, some graziers feel that they became equal to recently established pastures containing improved pasture species like orchard grass and meadow brome. Trials studying extending the grazing season with stockpiled forage, demonstrated that KBG/WC pastures retained quality, yield and palatability very well, late into the fall and even until early spring, provided that snow cover was adequate."

Kentucky Bluegrass has two distinctive leaf characteristics that make it easy to identify. The leaf tip is shaped like the bow of a boat and there are two parallel veins running the length of the leaf. Because of it's aggressive creeping nature, KBG will spread into open areas and even crowd out other plants if they are weak.

White Clover is the most widespread legume on earth, growing from the arctic circle to the temperate regions. There are three types growing in Alberta. Naturalized WC is less productive than are Ladino or White Dutch types, however it is more winter hardy and tolerant of close grazing. WC often has a V-shaped white mark on the leaves. Leaves and flowers grow from stolons, that are above ground, creeping stems that allow WC to spread over a large area.

"Both KBG and WC have shallow root systems which limits their productivity in hot, dry conditions," adds Erickson. "However, when allowed adequate periods of rest between grazings and with proper fertility, the root systems can be developed to improve the drought tolerance of the stand."

These observations prompted Alberta Agriculture and the Western Forage Beef Group to launch a series of experiments to research the potential of bluegrass cultivars and companion legumes. The first trial is now complete and initial results indicate that bluegrasses can come close to matching the season-long yield and quality of other pasture grasses. Another experiment looking at more bluegrass cultivars and companion legumes is entering its second year. Some new European bluegrass cultivars look promising, as does Caucasian or kura clover.

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Taken together, these trials will provide new insights into establishing long-lived, productive pastures. Learning how to more effectively manage existing pastures that have already proven their longevity is another opportunity for sustainable and profitable beef production.

Contact: Lorne Erickson
(403) 843-2201

The new agriculture economy demands a market focus

World trade is shifting from bulk commodities to consumer items and this trend changes the way agri-preneurs can earn a profit. Today, there is less money and opportunities available for those selling bulk commodities like wheat, hogs and canola. The real winners in today's market are the agri-preneurs who find out what consumers want or need and then deliver a value-added product or service to meet that need.

A shift in agri-business to a market driven strategy is needed to ride the wave of change. Market driven agri-businesses select a target customer and develop a product to suit their customer's wants and needs.

There are many ways to adopt a market driven strategy.

Monitor trends – Trends can stimulate new thinking about the agri-products or services offered. They also can focus market scanning to detect subtle changes in the ways suppliers, customers or competitors are behaving.

Seek Market Information – Use market research to understand the range of customers in the marketplace and their wants and needs. Market research answers the who, what, why, where and how questions all agri-business owners must ask. Use market research to decide how to sell a agri-product(s) or services before growing or processing begins. Whether it's an emerging nutraceutical crop or the processing of sunflower seeds, a well-defined market is needed.

Scan for Opportunities – Think about all the different products, processing techniques, marketing options (direct, retail or broker) and the local or international customers that can be accessed. Keep looking, listening and searching. There is a surprising range of opportunities to discover.

Understand market forces – To avoid a surprise during an agri-business start up or expansion, try to predict some of the issues that may have to be faced. Assess the competition both local and distant. Predict the potential weaknesses of suppliers and customers. Research the laws and regulations and adjust the agri-business design to comply.

Crunch some numbers – Put some numbers in the plan. Research current pricing of competitor products. Get really comfortable using analysis skills to make it quicker and easier to sort through information, make realistic projected statements and compare them to detailed actual financial statements.

Predict and assess possible outcomes – Nobody knows the future. The best estimate of customer demand, market price, supplier costs and competitor response is just that – an estimate.

One way to prepare for the future is to develop some scenarios. A scenario is a snapshot of how you see your agri-business in the future. It's based on key factors such as prices, costs and sales volumes, and incorporates what has been learned about trends, markets and opportunities. Each scenario should use various blends of the key factors to show how they affect profitability. Building scenarios helps focus market driven strategies.

This is the first article in ***Market Driven Agriculture ... Strategies for Success***, a series on how to develop a market focus in your business. The articles are presented by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in partnership with Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association, and will appear in Agri-News weekly for the next two months. For more business and market development information check the Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association websites at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/diversify**> and <**www.awei.ab.ca**>.

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Value chains – a winning commitment

It's no longer sufficient to produce a food product simply because you're good at it and enjoy doing it. In today's global food system the customer really is king.

"One of the ways rural food processors have recognized that is by implementing the value chain concept," says Karen Goad, agri-food development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Grande Prairie. "A value chain is a way of responding to consumer demands. It's giving customers what they ask for through the collaboration of agri-food producers, processors, distributors and retailers to the mutual benefit of all links in the supply chain. Products are pulled through by consumer demand in contrast to being pushed through by suppliers, as is the case in the traditional production chain."

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Participants in this winter's *Finding New Markets and Partners for Your Meat Products in Foodservice* program saw the benefit of the value chain strategy. *Finding New Markets*, offered in both Westlock and Athabasca, looked at all aspects of market research associated with the direct marketing of meat.

Thirty-one farms and three abattoirs took part in the eight session program. Dennis Ranger, of Barrhead Custom Meats, enrolled in *Finding New Markets* to identify new customers. "The way the program developed I quickly realized that I had a product food service wanted; a product others are not willing to or are unable to process," says Ranger.

Ranger actively set out to develop a small value chain to meet an identified market need. Partnering with an executive chef, restaurant owner, marketer and three producers, Ranger developed several unique pork products that are now on the menus of two fine-dining establishments in Edmonton. His product list started out with five items and is now up to 20.

Ranger is currently working with chefs to develop more products for foodservice. "The chefs I'm working with tell me they've never had a processor so willing to work so closely with them before," says Ranger. His *Nouvella Dolca Pork* product line has now expanded to include a wild boar product because of the partnerships formed throughout this process.

David Keindel, executive chef, Delta Edmonton Centre Suite Hotel and partner in *Finding New Markets*, is eager to support local products. "There are great opportunities for small producers and processors who have unique and quality products. But they have to come forward. We don't know who they are," says Keindel. The Delta showcases several Alberta products including *Nouvella Dolca Pork* from Barrhead Custom Meats, *Katahdin Lamb* from Spruce Park Ranch in Stony Plain, *Juices* from Bridge Berry Farms in Lethbridge and *Sweet Sara's Gourmet Products* from Cayley.

A successful value chain is a win-win situation for all partners. It's based on 'co-opetition', the co-operation between competitors or non-traditional partners, where all partners come out ahead. Usually value chains are developed to resolve an issue. It may be to provide market or product differentiation, as in Ranger's situation; to implement a quality assurance system; or to create efficiencies and reduce costs in infrastructure systems such as delivery and inventory.

"Are value chains easy? Not at all," says Goad. "They demand the willingness to commit to a common vision, trust, a significant investment of resources, flexibility and the ability to motivate others to change. Do they pay? You bet! Increasing profitability while reducing risk is the ultimate reward of every successful value chain."

The latest issue of **Northwest Processor** includes information on value chains: what they are, the benefits, who's doing them now, how to get started and sources of assistance. In addition, it highlights Cuisine Canada's Northern Bounty conference and several industry upcoming events.

The **Northwest Processor** is a newsletter that links rural processors and farm managers with food processing, research, technology and information. Published quarterly it is available free of charge by calling Goad at (780) 438-5629, or can be viewed on the Alberta Agriculture website at: < **http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/food/process/nwp/nwp10.html** >.

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Gathering market information

We live in an information rich age. That can be a real problem when you have to sort good information from meaningless information. A good, professional market analyst can spend about four full days per week gathering, sorting and interpreting the information available in the market.

"Producers often ask where they can find four full days to watch the markets," says Doug Walkey, market specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lacombe. "The short answer is they won't, so they need to rely on others to do some of that information sorting. Who they use and how much they rely on them is a personal decision."

There are many sources of market information. One type is a commodity oriented newsletter. The word newsletter may refer to a fax, e-mail or an internet report. Errol Anderson's ***ProMarket Wire*** is a classic example. The report contains lots of news about the futures markets, trends and a few charts. This type of information source usually covers a wide range of commodities, possibly ranging from hogs to canola to gold or oil. The information is often technical in nature, that is, heavily reliant on charts for their information.

A second type is the cash or basis oriented newsletter. Market Master's ***GrainWise*** is representative of the genre. This category concentrates more on farm gate selling opportunities, and highlights more local pricing possibilities. The backbone of information is fundamental, or supply and demand driven.

"These two types of market information complement each other," says Walkey. "The commodity futures price information reflects the value of your crop or livestock in the eyes of the world. The basis orientation reflects the cost of doing business, given that price. Having technical information allows you a view of the psychology of the market, how traders are thinking about price movements and trends. The fundamental view is tied to the powerful market forces of weather, demand, shortages and bumper crops. All go together to give a balanced view of when and how to market your production."

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The final word is balance. Too much of one kind of market information can be misleading. Fundamentals provide the overall trend; technicals provide the timing and magnitude of the price movements. Harvesting that market information can be as profitable as harvesting the crop.

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Alberta 4-H teen receives Premier's Award

A 17-year-old high school student from Morrin is the 2000 winner of the Alberta 4-H program's highest honour. Adelle Peterson was chosen as the Premier's Award recipient from 134 of the province's top 4-H members who have just wrapped up a weekend of personal development and group interaction.

During the annual Alberta 4-H Selections program in Olds from April 28 - May 1, delegates took part in activities designed to improve leadership and life skills. Focusing on the theme Making My Mark in the Millennium, they had the opportunity to build on existing skills and strengths as they gained an awareness and understanding of the process of goal setting for themselves and the world around them. They explored personal, educational, career, family and 4-H goals. Delegates worked together to formulate solutions to existing youth issues that included: urbanization, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, youth employment and health.

Peterson, thrilled to be named as the 37th Premier's Award recipient, is excited about the upcoming year. "4-H has been an awesome experience! I look forward to travelling across the province promoting this terrific program," she said. For the last eight years, Peterson has been an active member of the Trochu Valley Riders 4-H club and a one-year member of the Morrin 4-H club. Along with holding executive positions in her club, she takes part in various regional and provincial 4-H activities.

"Now I have the opportunity to coach younger members as they gain public speaking, leadership and project skills," she said.

Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development extended greetings to the participants and award recipients.

The sponsors of the Selections program - Agricore, Lammle's Western Wear, Novaritis, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, were also recognized.

"From my personal experience, 4-H gives youth the edge to compete in today's global marketplace," said Lund. "4-H'ers are leaders in their communities and future leaders in the agriculture and food industry. Congratulations to all who participated in Selections."

Peterson will officially accept her award from Premier Klein at a later date, succeeding Andrew Ormberg of Rimbey, the recipient of the 1999 Premier's Award

In addition to receiving the Premier's Award and meeting the Premier, Peterson becomes an Ambassador. Peterson will promote 4-H along with 13 others who were chosen at Selections as 4-H Ambassadors for their leadership, communication and personal development skills.

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The 4-H Selections program

There are 58 trips awarded at the 4-H Selections program. The following list includes a brief award description and the award recipients who will represent Alberta at major educational programs and tours throughout Canada and the United States over the next 12 months.

- **4-H Ambassadors Group** – exemplify leadership, communication and personal development, skills Alberta's 4-H program is recognized for. Their role is to promote 4-H.

Regional Ambassadors:

Southern – Dale Sandberg, Fort Macleod; Erin Kindt, Nanton

Calgary – Kelly Ashbacher, Millarville; Adelle Peterson, Morrin

West Central – Tony Jeglum, Clive;
Caitlyn DeBruyne, Westerose

East Central – Amanda Boon, Delia; Trish Brown, Erskine

Northeast – Dione Litun, Vegreville;
Jocelyn (Josh) Labonté, Plamondon

Northwest – Meghan Clark, Calmar; Sandy Szybunka, Sangudo

Peace – Clint Davis, Valleyview; Lauren Chykalsky, Peace River

Award Programs

- **4-H Alberta/Northwest Territories Agriculture Development Tour** – July 17-28, 2000.
  Sponsor: Alberta 4-H Program Trust.

Twenty senior 4-H members will increase their awareness of the diversity of agriculture in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The tour, which includes travel to Yellowknife, allows the members to gain an appreciation of different cultures and lifestyles. Camping on the way, the members purchase Alberta products wherever possible, visit

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agricultural processing and production facilities, and identify Alberta products that are available in the Northwest Territories.

Recipients: Amanda Boon, Delia; Jody Newton, Del Bonita; Rod Curtis, Heisler; Dana Pedersen, Edgerton; Peter Danyluk, Elk Point; Sarah Pitzel, Alder Flats; Clint Davis, Valleyview; Erin Rasmuson, Gwynne; Melissa Doenz, Warner; Sarah Rowledge, Erksine; Tracy Gaulter, Thorsby; Christin Semeniuk, Myrnam; Stephanie Godson, Warner; Kida Sewall, Patricia; John Henderson, Vimy; James Shepherd, Gadsby; Chris James, Vegreville; Blair Stone, Westerose; Amy Johanson, Westerose; Andrea Sime, Fort Saskatchewan; Sherry Johnson, Evansburg; Mark Trabysh, Hairy Hill; Lisa Kallal, Clyde; Nicole Young, Camrose

- **The Royal Bank 4-H Interprovincial Exchange (IPE)** – July 4-18, 2000.
  Sponsor: The Royal Bank of Canada

Delegates meet in Calgary for a send-off banquet before they depart to their host provinces. There they have the opportunity to meet other IPE delegates from across Canada. During a home stay, they experience the lifestyles and customs of another province by exchanging ideas and developing a better understanding and appreciation of other Canadians.

Recipients: Manitoba – Andrea Dawson, Sundre;
New Brunswick – Tony Jeglum, Clive;
Newfoundland – Kyli Boutin, Pickardville;
Nova Scotia – Birkley Wisniewski, Hairy Hill;
Quebec – Sandy Szybunka, Sangudo

- **Montana 4-H Congress, Bozeman, Montana** – July 8 -15, 2000.
  Sponsor: Weston Garfield Foundation

Four delegates travel to Bozeman, Montana to attend the annual Montana 4-H Congress. Delegates are invited to take part in seminars, workshops and discussions as well as observe various competitions. Delegates tour historical and agriculture-related points of interest.

Recipients: Dustin Cowan, Compeer; Jay Holt, Lloydminster; Jennifer Kupsch, Barrhead; Adele Prefontaine, Legal

- **National 4-H Citizenship Seminar, Ottawa, Ontario** – March 30 to April 5, 2001.
  Sponsor: Canadian 4-H Council

Alberta's six 4-H'ers join delegates from each of the provinces. They participate in group discussions, lectures and seminars dealing with the Canadian government structure. They visit the Parliament Buildings, attend a session at the House of Commons and tour Government House as well as the city of Ottawa.

Recipients: Karen Broadbent, Lac La Biche; Caitlyn DeBruyne, Westerose; Jocelyn (Josh) Labonté, Plamondon; Megan McLenaghan, Barrhead; Mary Rutledge, Wainwright; Dawn Sunderman, Alder Flats

- **National 4-H Conference, Toronto, Ontario** – November 1 to 5, 2000.
  Sponsor: Canadian 4-H Council

Six Alberta delegates, along with delegates from other provinces, the United States and the United Kingdom, come together for six days in Toronto. This program deals with issues and concerns relevant to senior 4-H members. It involves group discussions, guest lecturers and total group participation in a variety of sessions. Delegates also tour the city of Toronto and visit the Royal Winter Fair.

Recipients: Kelly Ashbacher, Millarville; Dione Litun, Vegreville; Lyndsey Kreiser, Legal; Robyn Mader, Carstairs; Annette Properzi, Westlock; Kristen Yaremchuk, Beauvallon

- **National 4-H Members' Conference, Washington, DC** – March 29 - April 7, 2001.
  Sponsor: Semex Canada

An Alberta 4-H'er flies to Ottawa and joins nine delegates from across Canada to participate in a ceremony at Citizenship Court. They visit the Parliament Buildings and tour other sites of interest before departing to Washington, DC. There, they participate with American 4-H members in group sessions dealing with the different aspects of 4-H and agriculture.

Recipient: Jackie Yackimec, Beauvallon

- **California 4-H Exchange, Davis, California** – August 11-13, 2000 (Conference) (Host family stay prior to Conference).
  Sponsor: Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce

Two Alberta 4-H delegates join California 4-H members for the California Annual 4-H Leadership Conference. Prior to the conference they participate in a host family stay. Delegates experience 4-H programming in California, visit with members and exchange ideas.

The conference focuses on developing leadership skills and discusses current issues and careers.

Recipients: Meghan Clark, Calmar; Dale Sandberg, Fort Macleod

- **National 4-H Careers Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba** – March 28 - April 1, 2001 (Host family stay March 24-28, 2001).
  Sponsor: Canadian 4-H Council

Two Alberta delegates join 16 delegates from across Canada and 40 senior 4-H members from Manitoba to participate in an extensive career development program. They explore careers related to the agriculture industry, receive guidance in career choices and study the importance of agriculture in Canada's economy. They also have an opportunity to spend four days with a Manitoba host family prior to the conference.

Recipients: Trish Brown, Erskine; Colleen Dear, Wetaskiwin

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- **Summer Youth Leadership Camp, Hinton, Alberta** – July 3-8, 2000.
  Sponsors: AEC Pipelines Ltd.

Four Alberta 4-H'ers participate in this extensive leadership seminar. The program is designed to help delegates become stronger leaders and learn new interpersonal skills. The program combines physical activities with classroom theories and practice. This includes cross-cultural communications, public speaking, presentations, group dynamics and conflict resolution.

Recipients: Michael Fontaine, St. Paul; Georgina Lieverse, Beaver Lodge; Julie Ulseth, Veteran; Cari-Ann Viney, Didsbury

- **Seminar on the United Nations and International Affairs, Goldeye Centre** – Session A: August 13-18, 2000 or Session B: August 20-25, 2000.
  Sponsor: Calgary Exhibition & Stampede

Alberta delegates join more than 130, mostly urban, high school students at a seminar on the United Nations and International Affairs to be held at the Goldeye Centre near Nordegg. This program explores the political, economic and social dynamics of international affairs with diplomats from the United Nations, Canadian Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Recipients: Adelle Peterson, Morrin; Kira Sallis, Sexsmith

- **Atlantic Provinces 4-H Young Foresters' Camp, Prince Edward Island** – July 19-22, 2000
  (tentative host family stay).
  Sponsor: Alberta 4-H Programs Trust

This program gives 4-H'ers a greater appreciation of the importance of forest in the lives of all Canadians. Participants learn about the complex community of plant and animal life that we call the Forest Environment. They are assigned to teams that participate in friendly competitions in a hands-on setting. These deal with map and compass work, tree, plant and insect identification, forest management and other activities.

Recipient: Gerrid Wrubleski, New Sarepta

Alternate List

4-H members listed as an alternate may be called upon to replace a delegate at any one of the above programs

Jaron Arntzen, Sedgewick; Clint Ashbacher, Millarville; Carla Boyne, Wembley; Sarah Cameron, Calmar; Leanne Grenier, Airdrie; Crystal Housch, Hanna; Jordan James, Vegreville; Jaime Lutz, Warner; Andrea Petherbridge, Bon Accord; Sheryl Ruskowsky, Wetaskiwin; Chad Sewall, Patricia; Carmen Stone, Westerose; Aspen Walsh, Coaldale; Lanna Wesley, Claresholm; Debbie Zimmer, Daysland

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Agri-News Briefs

May is Mushroom Month

It's mushroom month in Alberta and unlike the delicious product that grows best when kept in the dark, the industry in the province is making great strides and deserve a little light shed on it.

- types of mushrooms grown in Alberta include- white button, brown, oyster, portabella, shitake and a variety of edible wild mushrooms
- on average, Albertans consumes 5 to 5 1/4 pounds of mushrooms per year
- over 14 million pounds of mushrooms are produced in Alberta each year
- the mushroom industry in Alberta contributes over $22 million to the provincial economy
- there are five major mushroom producers in Alberta: Money's Mushrooms Ltd., Airdrie; Mo-Na Food Enterprises Ltd., Edmonton; Prairie Mushrooms (1992) Ltd., Sherwood Park; Superior Mushroom Farms Ltd., Ardrossan; and Tiger Mushroom Farm Ltd., Nanton
- mushroom production in Canada dates back to 1912 and in 1999, Canada's annual production reached over 160 million pounds

Mushrooms, what's so special?

May is Mushroom Month. Sauteed, roasted, braised or as part of a great salad, mushrooms add something special.

- mushrooms are ideal for health-conscious consumers
- they are a good source of fibre, low in calories and sodium-free, fat-free and cholesterol free
- they are mineral-rich with iron, potassium and magnesium, as well as riboflavin and B vitamins
- white button mushrooms have more potassium than other mushrooms and Shitake are higher in fibre and protein

New Weed Scientist Appointed at CDC South

Dr. Chris Neeser was appointed as the new weed scientist at the Crop Diversification Centre South in Brooks on May 1, 2000, succeeding Rudy Esau, who held the position for 23 years. Neeser completed his B.Sc.Agr. degree at McGill University in 1990, majoring in Botany, and was granted a M.Sc. degree in Plant Science at the same university in 1992. He continued his studies at the University of Guelph and completed a Ph.D. degree in Agricultural Production and Agroecosystems in 1997. Prior to joining the staff at CDC South, Neeser spent two years as a research associate in weed ecology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Neeser's extensive academic training and experience gained while growing up on a farm in Quebec and working as an agricultural consultant and teacher in Costa Rica, will enable him to handle the varied research and extension duties of his new position. "Neeser will be responsible for the Centre's weed science program, mandated to develop innovative strategies for managing weeds in a variety of horticultural and special crops. He will also communicate research findings and provide weed identification and control recommendations to producers, crop specialists and industry representatives. For further information, contact Chris Neeser at (403) 362-1331.

Agri-News

May 22, 2000

Alberta optimistic over grain transportation reform

Proposed federal legislation announced today on reform of the Canadian grain transportation and handling system is a good start on the changes needed to create a more efficient and accountable system in the long term.

Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, expressed the provincial government's cautious optimism over the intent of the announced initiatives. The federal government expects to introduce the bill in the House of Commons by the end of May 2000 with a view to initiate changes for the new crop year beginning August 1, 2000.

"These changes are fairly close to the recommendations in the Kroeger report," says Lund. "We still have some reservations, but this has been a long, drawn out process and I am glad that we have finally reached a point where we can begin to achieve savings for our farmers."

Intended changes to the grain transportation system include a move from rate cap to revenue cap on freight and a reduction in freight rates, both of which will benefit Alberta producers in the short term. Implementation of tendering and changes to competitive access will also position the industry for the long term. The federal government also followed through on a suggestion from the Alberta government to create a third party monitoring system. Alberta will pressure the federal government to ensure the reports generated by the monitoring agency will be made public.

Ed Stelmach, Minister of Infrastructure, said he was also pleased with a number of the changes reflected in the proposed legislation.

"We're satisfied that the federal government's implementation of some recommendations of the Kroeger report is a good step toward improving the system," says Stelmach. "Both the railway revenue cap and the move toward commercialization of the grain handling sector will help to substantially reduce transportation costs for western producers. We are pleased to see some federal investment in the province's roadways as well."

"However, there is room for improvement," Stelmach adds. "Current estimates show that full commercialization of grain transportation could save western producers 25 percent of current costs or $325 million more than the federal proposal.

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This Week

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Alberta
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We also look forward to the review of the Canadian Transportation Agency resolving the ongoing concerns with rail service."

Alberta has lobbied the federal government for a number of years on reform of the grain transportation and handling system, advocating a more commercial, competitive and accountable system that meets the needs of both customers and producers.

"We didn't get everything we had hoped for but there are a number of good benefits off the top," says Lund. "It still gives the Canadian Wheat Board more logistical control than we would like to see but I hope they will fully embrace the intent of the proposed changes."

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Alberta Government numbers are toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000 first

Safe and visible

Alberta's rural roads and many secondary highways are now busy with slow moving farm equipment. Farm equipment, because of its large size and slow speed, is very vulnerable to collisions with other vehicles. Farmers and farm machinery operators are asked to make the moves safe and visible and motorists are asked to watch for these slower moving farm vehicles to help reduce the risk of collisions.

Make It Safe Make It Visible is a publication produced by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Infrastructure and the Canada West Equipment Dealers Association. It gives several recommendations for making moving farm equipment a safe practice.

Farm equipment is often moved to new fields in the morning or evening. The rising and setting sun can make the danger much greater at this time of the day. Everyone needs to be vigilant and alert. Farmers are required by regulation to mark and light their vehicles.

Daytime driving - daytime is from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset. Outside of this time, or when weather conditions reduce visibility, proper lighting on farm vehicles is required. A slow moving vehicle sign must be attached to the rear of the vehicle three to five feet above the road. Warning flags can be used to mark wide or long loads. If an implement is towed, it too must have the slow moving vehicle signs attached to the rear of the vehicle.

Night driving – all night driving requires lights. This includes any time when there is not enough light to clearly see a person 150 metres away. There must be at least two and not more than four headlights. Loads or vehicles over 8.5 feet wide require warning lights at the widest point. Two tail lamps are also required at night. Turn signals are not required, but are a good idea.

"Remember to make moving farm vehicles safe and visible," says Eric Jones, farm safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton.

Additional information on the regulations in the Highway Traffic Act and the Motor Transport Act, as well as the Make It Safe Make It Visible publication are available by calling the Queens Printer in Edmonton, or visiting their website at **<www.gov.ab.ca/qp/ecomm/index.html>**.

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Alberta Yards and Gardens

If you need to know what to plant in your yard or garden, how to take care of your trees and shrubs, or how to attract birds and butterflies, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has the book for you.

Alberta Yards and Gardens: What to Grow is available for sale at district offices throughout the province, as well as the Publications Office, located in the J.G. O'Donoghue Building at 7000 - 113 Street in Edmonton. The 236-page book is an update to the *Alberta Horticultural Guide*, published in 1994.

"The book provides the information you need to successfully grow ornamental trees and shrubs, small fruits and berries, vegetables, herbs and even water plants," says author Shelley Barkley, information officer at Alberta Agriculture's Crop Diversification Centre South in Brooks. "It includes tips and techniques for wintering roses, pruning, container gardening and lawn care."

Barkley explains that the book tries to deal with all the traditional topics, as well as the new trends.

"The book includes information on many gardening and yard care topics," says Barkley. "There is even information on water gardening, herb gardening and xeriscaping – gardening practices that conserve water."

The book features a 6" x 9" format, with a spiral bind and color charts.

"The charts are user-friendly and full of information that the reader will find beneficial," says Barkley. "There are details about flower color and bloom time, landscaping and other uses for plants, height and spread, and specialty features like prominent foliage, fragrance and whether a plant is edible."

Cont'd on page 3

Alberta Yards and Gardens: What to Grow will help both the hobby gardener and the serious horticulturist deal with the extreme growing conditions found in Alberta. It sells for $15 plus GST (add $2 plus GST for shipping and handling). To purchase a copy, contact your local Alberta Agriculture district office, the publications office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton T6H 5T6, or phone toll-free, 1-800-292-5697.

Contact: *Shelley Barkley*
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Purchasing and caring for rose plants

Roses can be purchased two ways - bare root or potted. Bare root roses are usually packaged in moist peat moss and then wrapped in water-proof packaging. Bare root roses are usually available in the spring. When buying bare root roses the plant should have at least 3 healthy stems, leaf buds are plainly visible, cane bark is not wrinkled or withered, and sprouts are not longer than 12 mm. A healthy rose plant is plump and green but do not confuse this with the green wax applied to the canes to keep them from dehydrating.

Container roses are available throughout the growing season. When buying container roses, look for the same qualities you look for in buying any shrub.

Roses require six hours of direct sunlight a day. Some shade in the afternoon helps to prevent the flowers from fading. Good air movement through the rose planting is necessary to aid in disease prevention. They do not compete well with other plants so they should be planted away from other trees or shrubs. A soil that is well drained with a pH between 5.5 to 6.5 is preferred. Adding organic matter in the form of peatmoss or well-rotted manure helps improve the plant vigor.

When planting bare root roses, soak the roots overnight in water. Dig a hole large enough to allow for the roots to be unrestricted. Remove the plants from the water, prune any broken roots or branches, leaving no more than 4-6 buds to a branch. In the bottom of the hole make a cone-shaped mound of soil and place the plant. Fill the hole 3/4 full of soil and gently tamp, next fill the hole with water and when the water is gone, fill with soil. Plant grafted roses with the bud union 5-7 cm below the soil line. Mound loose soil 15 cm over each plant to protect from the cold and drying winds. Keep this mound moist and leave it in place until the growth starts. Carefully remove the mound on a cool day.

Roses in containers can be planted throughout the growing season. Carefully remove the rose from the pot and place in the hole without disturbing the root ball. Fill the hole and tamp , then water. The rose should be planted so the soil level of the root ball is even with the soil surrounding the hole. Container grown roses do not need to be mounded.

Adequate fertilizing and watering will help to increase flower production. Regularly fertilize with a water soluble fertilizer such as 24-24-14, 15-30-15 or 28-14-14. Fertilize May 15 and June 30 - July 31. The granular rose foods can be used instead applying the fertilizer May 15 and June 15 and July 15. Do not apply fertilizers after August 1.

Roses require a minimum of 2.5 cm of water a week. Apply the water directly to the soil surface rather than with overhead sprinklers to prevent foliage diseases. A 25 L pail is equivalent to 2.5 cm of water.

Alberta Yards and Gardens: What to Grow, an Alberta Agriculture publication, has a section on roses, their care and plant descriptions. This book is available for sale at all Alberta district offices and at the publications office, located in the J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Cost of the publication is $15 plus GST (add $2 plus GST for shipping and handling).

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Consumer trends in the marketplace

What's new? Answers to this commonly asked question can be used to provide innovative ideas and inspiration to an agri-business. Regular scanning of consumer marketplace trends can help to keep a business competitive by using trend ideas when making changes to an agri-business or monitoring the changes the competition is making.

Some key phrases and ideas that are currently being used in business are:

Organic foods and natural products – these continue to gain market share and acceptance. Freshness dating is very important to consumers. They want to know just how fresh a product really is. Vegetarian menu food and processed products are enjoying strong growth and are very popular in the restaurant market. Labelling and the type of container being selected should be carefully considered when trying to appeal to the healthy food consumer.

Food as medicine – gives hope and optimism to consumers who want to do the best thing for their bodies. Many consumers will select a food because it lowers the risk of disease. In order of consumer preference the foods most popular for disease prevention are broccoli, oranges or orange juice, fish, dark green vegetables, tomatoes, garlic, oat bran, beans and olive oil, yogurt, sweet potatoes and soy products.

Signature ingredients – catch the attention of consumers who are eager for variety and interested in their eating. A signature ingredient means only one new ingredient is added to a common recipe. For example a hearty chili may use

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wasabi, an Asian hot spice rather than Mexican chilies to give it a signature distinction. Current or emerging signature ingredients include: coconut milk, aged miso, fish sauces, far East varieties of herbs such as basil, mint, coriander, or shallots, bok choy and other far East vegetables.

Simpler Foods – these take less time to prepare and will continue to be popular with consumers. Partly prepared foods that provide leftovers are gaining market share as consumers dislike of cooking and cleanup chores continues. Five or fewer ingredients is a new standard in recipe design.

Less shopping – is really important to busy consumers. People dread the chore of shopping and want to complete the job as quickly as possible. A business offering a tasty meal idea that bundles the ingredients together, will certainly catch the attention of the consumer. Opportunities for online shopping will grow rapidly in the next few years. Offering regular home delivery of basic or specialized goods will make consumers take notice.

Food to run with – will continue to be popular. Consumers have really taken to the idea of holding their meal in their hand while they do other things. Handheld dinner and lunch foods have been popular for some time. Breakfast foods that can be eaten on the run are the next growth market.

There are market trends in every product market. The question that needs to be asked is can this trend be adapted into my agri-business?

This is the second article in ***Market Driven Agriculture ... Strategies for Success***, a series on how to develop a market focus in your business. The articles are presented by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in partnership with Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association, and will appear in Agri-News weekly for the next two months. For more business and market development information check the Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association websites at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/diversify**> and <**www.awei.ab.ca**>.

Contact: *Donna Fleury*
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Agri-preneurs target their customers

Agriculture is shifting from production based to a market driven industry. Because there are many market forces that can affect an agri-business in a market driven industry, it's important to develop a market focus for a business. Market focus means targeting the business to a specific group.

With a well researched and defined market focus a business planner can:

- identify profit centres;
- develop complementary products and services and/or add value to agricultural commodities;
- create a more detailed business to obtain financing, attract investors, and keep goals clearly in focus;
- target emerging markets based on the customer tastes and preferences; and,
- improve stability against competition by competing on more than price.

To create a market focus for an agri-business it is important to target a specific group. One sure way to chunk the marketplace into bite size pieces is to look closely at customer groups. Customers can be grouped or segmented according to many factors. Demographics can separate customers according to education, income, age, place of residence and family size.

Lifestyle groups are another way advisors coordinate customer groups. This goes beyond demographic factors to detail what is important to that specific consumer group. A lifestyle group may include information on preferred leisure activities, time use and the number of meals eaten away from home per week.

Another way to segment a market is by differentiating the values and wants of customers. Ask a person what is important to them and you will discover their values. Values often transform into a want that can be supplied by the market. For example, a customer is concerned about food safety and may value foods that have been grown with no pesticides or fertilizers. Organic vegetables or natural beef products at a local farmers' market supplies this value to the customer. The business of addressing customer wants can extend to all parts of a business from products, marketing, packaging and how the products are sold.

Customers can be grouped according to their feelings about price. Many business advisors refer to this as price sensitivity. Everyone has opinions about price, but some people are so price sensitive they will find a substitute unless a product is offered at the lowest price. On the other end of the scale are consumers who are willing to pay a large price for an item as long as it delivers quality, luxury and a *good feeling* when purchasing. The type of price sensitive consumer attracted to a product will affect many decisions from a business strategy, from the product to packaging, service, distribution and of course pricing.

Once research has been done, several customer groupings can be combined to create an ideal customer profile. A clear idea of your target customer is a first step towards developing a market focus and a successful business.

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Land Agents Licensing Regulations review

In March 1998, a Discussion Paper on the review of the ***Land Agents Licensing Regulation*** and the ***Land Agents Licensing Exemption Regulation*** was circulated in Alberta. The input received on the Discussion Paper has been reviewed and a three-column document prepared.

"The three-column document outlines the present wording of the regulation, the proposed wording, and the rationale for the proposed change," says Gerry Kress, deputy registrar of land agents with Alberta Environment, Edmonton. "We encourage Albertans to review the three-column document and provide any comments to us before June 12, 2000."

A copy of the document can be obtained from the Land Agents Licensing web page at <**www.gov.ab.ca/env/land/land_agents/**> or by contacting:

Alberta Environment
Land Agents Licensing
2nd Floor, Petroleum Plaza – South Tower
9915 – 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2G8

Contact: *Gerry Kress*
(780) 415-4619
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(780) 415-4600
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Help 4-H make a difference

The late W. J. Elliott, principal of the Olds School of Agriculture and founder of the 4-H clubs in Alberta, would have been proud. In the last 82 years, Alberta's 4-H program has gone from cows and cooking ... to internet and entrepreneurs. Members are involved in projects such as the environment, entrepreneurship, photography, small engines and veterinary science.

The 4-H Foundation of Alberta is enhancing the opportunities 4-H youth have by leading the Millennium Fund campaign. "The money will be invested and managed by the Foundation on behalf of 4-H in Alberta," explains Marie Logan, chairperson of the 4-H Millennium Fund. "The goal is $500,000. The interest generated by this fund will be used to enhance 4-H at all levels to ensure that 4-H continues to be a dynamic youth program for years to come. The interest generated each year will be available as grants."

All clubs, districts, regions or any other 4-H program can apply for financial assistance. For example, creative projects such as club equipment, a 4-H exchange or a skill development program, could be eligible for Millennium Funds.

The recent Measures of Success study looked at the impact of the 4-H program in Canada on members, families and alumni. It proved what industry leaders have noted for years: 4-H gives youth the edge to compete in today's world. 4-H'ers gain leadership skills, communication skills, decision-making and financial management skills. They develop self-confidence and self-esteem. They are prepared to become responsible citizens active in their communities.

"4-H'ers stand out in their communities," adds Logan. "They are active in their schools, churches and youth groups. Former 4-H'ers are well represented in boardrooms from the local agricultural society to the corporations of the global marketplace."

To make a donation to the Millennium Fund contact your local 4-H club or send a cheque payable to *Alberta 4-H Millennium Fund* to 4-H Foundation of Alberta, 7000 - 113 Street, Room 200, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Self-addressed, postage paid donor envelopes are available from local 4-H clubs, 4-H Foundation of Alberta, regional 4-H offices, and the 4-H Branch.

Contact: *Marie Logan*
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Agri-News Briefs

New variety release agreement

Alberta Pulse Growers (APG) entered a five-year variety development and release agreement with Saskatchewan and Manitoba pulse grower organizations. This gives Select Growers full access to lentil, chickpea and pea varieties developed at the Crop Development Centre in Saskatoon and pea varieties developed at Alberta's Crop Development Unit with no royalties attached. This agreement enhances the pulse breeding programs carried out by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at Oliver and Brooks. APG's representative on the Variety Release Committee is past president, Will Van Roessel of Bow Island. For more information on this agreement, call (780) 986-9398.

Sheep sweepstakes 2000

Members of the Southern Alberta Sheep Breeders are holding the Sheep Sweepstakes 2000 on June 2 and 3, 2000 in Picture Butte, Alberta. The two-day occasion consists of many events, such as a $750 winner-takes-all Sheep Sweeps, a high purse market lamb competition, pen of three ewe lambs competition, the official UFA Junior Show event, the Canadian Fleece Competition, the Great Southern Alberta Lamb Cook-off, Twoonie breakfast, and evening lamb barbecue and trade booths. There will also be breeder displays offering quality ewes and rams for sale. For more information, contact Mic Thiessen at (403) 327-8808 or Frances Pittman at (403) 757-2395.

Agri-News

May 29, 2000

Stockmen's Range Management Course

On June 27, 2000, Public Lands and Rural Advisory Services, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is offering a Stockmen's Range Management Course at Craigend Hall, located about 14 miles south of Lac La Biche. The course is sponsored by the Alberta Cattle Commission, Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Program, Craigend Agricultural Society, Alberta Conservation Association and the Lakeland Agriculture Research Association.

"This is a hands-on course designed for anyone interested in learning more about sustainable grazing on forested rangelands, particularly from the Athabasca, Smoky Lake, Lac La Biche, Bonnyville, and St. Paul areas," says Gerry Ehlert, provincial grazing reserve manager with Public Lands, St. Paul.

The Stockmen's Range Management Course combines presentations and field application. The morning session, held at Craigend Hall, features a presentation by Dr. Paul Hansen, ***Riparian and Wetland Research Program***. Hansen discusses the importance of riparian areas and wetlands to the livestock producer and to the overall health of the watershed. Range management and forage specialists from the Peace, northwest, central, and northeast regions will make presentations on range ecology, grazing forest and tame pasture, grazing research results, grazing economics and range management planning.

The afternoon will be spent on the Lakeland Forage Association Grazing Lease. Producers will be able to get hands on experience identifying forage plants and plant communities, assessing pasture health and forage productivity, assessing health of riparian areas, and setting sustainable stocking rates. In addition, guest livestock producers and Chuck Richardson, range management specialist with Public Lands, Sherwood, Park will present and discuss their perspectives on grazing management, brush and weed control.

"This course offers a variety of tools that producers can consider in their profitable livestock grazing operation," says Harvey Yoder, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Lac La Biche.

The cost of the course includes a copy of the ***Grazing Management of Northern Rangelands Home Study Course***. The home study course is a complete guide to grazing northern rangelands. It uses a step-by-step approach to

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

illustrate how to develop an ecologically based range management plan. The producers can work through the materials as time permits and apply the information to their own grazing operation.

Each person attending this course also receives a copy of the newly published ***Northern Range Plants***, a plant identification book. This book has line drawings and colour photographs of some of the most common northern range plants and hints on how to identify them. The book also includes comments on forage value and habitat. "Forage plants include shrubs, forbs, and grasses. However, not all the plants are palatable to livestock," says Donna Lawrence, range management specialist with Public Lands, Barrhead. "It is important to know which plants are grazed and then estimate the useable forage. This amount of forage is how you can set sustainable and profitable stocking rates."

The cost of the course is $65 per person, or $90 per couple or pair. Couples/pairs share the books given out at the course. There is only room for 40 participants so early registration is advised. Lunch, a steak supper and transportation to the afternoon study sites are included in the registration fee.

Registration deadline for this Stockmen's Course is June 20, 2000. To register, call the public lands office in St. Paul at (780) 645-6336 or pick up a registration form from any agriculture office in the Northeast and Northwest Regions.

Contact:	*Gerry Ehlert*	*Harvey Yoder*
	(780) 645-6336	*(780) 623-5218*

Dutch Elm Disease Awareness Week

Currently, Alberta is one of the last two locations in North America that is free of the most destructive disease of elm trees known, Dutch elm disease (DED). The non profit Society to Prevent Dutch Elm Disease (STOPDED) and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development have been working hard to save Alberta elms and to further promote the STOPDED program, the week of May 29 to June 2 has been proclaimed Dutch Elm Disease Awareness Week.

"DED has killed millions of elms throughout North America since its introduction in 1930," says Janet Feddes-Calpas, Alberta Agriculture's Dutch Elm Disease Program coordinator, Brooks. "The incidents of DED has increased in Saskatchewan according to 1999 surveys, but through an aggressive prevention program, the numbers have been kept down. Great Falls, Montana continues to fight the disease and has managed to keep losses down to two to three per cent a year."

In March of 1999, a province wide elm inventory in all the municipalities was completed in Alberta by STOPDED employees. The condition and size of each elm tree was recorded. It is now known that a total of 219,334 elms valued at $634 million grow in Alberta urban areas. A complete elm inventory supplies the basic information necessary for an effective management program should DED appear in Alberta. The information will also identify areas where more intensive surveillance is necessary due to the number and/or condition of the elm trees.

Municipal plantings of elms range from 10 to 50 per cent of the overall tree plantings. Alberta can't afford to lose a resource that provides so many environmental benefits. In Alberta landscaping, there is a very limited choice of trees, none of which approach the aesthetic beauty or suitability of the elm. Without an on going continuous prevention program the entire population of elms in a community can easily be lost within a few years.

During ***Dutch Elm Disease Awareness Week*** in Alberta, May 29 to June 2, Albertans are asked to help save our beautiful American elm trees by taking the following preventive measures:

- Keep your elm trees healthy and vigorous.
- Elm wood provides ideal breeding sites for the tiny elm bark beetle that spreads DED. Dispose of all elm wood by burning, burying or chipping it.
- Learn how to identify the signs of DED and beetle activity so that you can report them to the DED Hotline nearest to your community. Symptoms usually appear in mid-June to mid-July when the leaves wilt or droop, curl up and become brown. Leaves on trees infected later in the season usually turn yellow and drop prematurely. Leaf symptoms are accompanied by brown staining under the bark. All suspicious elms must be tested in a lab for the presence of the fungus. A confirmed DED tree must be removed immediately to prevent further spread.
- Water elms well from April to mid August. To allow the tree to harden off for the winter, watering should be stopped mid August followed by a good soaking or two before freeze-up.
- Dead branches and trees, which provide beetle habitat, should be removed. Since elm bark beetles are attracted to fresh tree wounds, pruning must only be done between October 1 to March 3,1 when the beetles are not in their active stage.
- Become more involved in the preservation of our elm trees and become a STOPDED member.

DO NOT!

- Store elm firewood at any time!
- Transport elm firewood!
- Prune elms between April 1 to September 30!

"DED is caused by a fatal fungus that clogs an elm tree's water conducting system, causing its leaves to wilt and the tree to die, usually within one or two seasons," adds Feddes-Calpas.

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"The fungus that affects all species of elm is primarily spread from one tree to another by two species of insect vectors, the smaller European elm bark beetle (SEEBB), and the native elm bark beetle (NEBB). The beetles are attracted to weak and dying trees, which serve as breeding sites for the beetles. Once the beetles have pupated and turned into adults they leave the brood gallery and fly to healthy elms to feed, thus transporting the fungus on their bodies from one tree to the next.

"For this reason, it is important that elm firewood not be transported into or within Alberta as the wood may be harboring the bark beetles that carry the deadly DED fungus. Firewood is confiscated at all the Alberta-Montana border crossings. Monitoring for the beetle is done every year throughout the province."

Alberta has been fortunate to remain DED free for many years however, in 1998 an isolated case of the disease was confirmed in Wainwright. The tree was immediately removed and burned. It is believed that firewood brought into the province was the source of infection. In previous years SEEBB have been found in Calgary, Edmonton, St. Albert, Strathcona County, Vauxhall, High River, Coutts and Medicine Hat.

All the municipalities in the province are encouraged to develop a DED prevention program. This involves monitoring for the vectors, DED surveillance, public awareness, firewood control, and pruning of dead wood out of the elms between the dates of October 1 – March 31. A ***DED Response Plan*** has been completed for the province of Alberta outlining the responsibilities of organizations in the management of DED.

Until there is a cure for DED, prevention remains our most effective form of control. DED can be prevented.

For more information on Dutch elm disease or the DED prevention program call the provincial hotline by dialling toll free 310-0000 and ask for 362-1300, or check out the web DED page <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/pests/diseases/ded/html**>.

Contact: Janet Feddes-Calpas
(403) 362-1337

Hands On Solutions – Manure Management 2000

The Manure Management 2000 conference is planned with the producer in mind. It will take a look at issues and provide participants with *hands on solutions* to the everyday and technical issues surrounding the livestock industry. The Conference is planned for June 26 to 28, 2000 in Calgary.

"From plenary sessions on key topics that include producers as speakers, to site tours and demonstrations, to a manure management and odour program, to break-out sessions, participants will receive accurate and timely information in a hands on, interactive fashion," explains Darcy Fitzgerald, environment management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Red Deer. "This conference is not just for livestock producers, it will benefit anyone who has manure or who uses manure on their farms."

The primary focus of the conference is on nutrient management planning. It will also cover items such as how to use manure as a resource to save money and how to reduce odours from manure. "Several producers will be speaking about how they currently manage manure on their farms, and in particular what their costs are, what their savings are and how it affects the bottom line," says Fitzgerald

Conference Highlights:

- **New Technologies & Ideas Market** – An evening of practical research highlights and useful technologies that producers can use to manage manure on their farms.
- **From Conflict to Cooperation** – An interactive session that covers the principles of preventing and resolving conflict, understanding why conflict occurs and the value of avoiding or resolving conflict.
- **Site Tour and Demonstrations** – An opportunity to see the latest in manure application technology, equipment, feedlot siting, compositing and other manure management options.
- **Regulations and the Livestock Industry** – A lively discussion with representatives from the livestock industry, municipal and provincial government, environmental organizations, academia and an agricultural lawyer
- **Manure Management Program** – A full morning program on how to maximize the nutrients in manure. Learn how to use nutrients effectively and save money on purchased fertilizers.
- **Odour Program** – A full morning program discussing odours; what is it, where does it come from; how does it affect people and animals; dealing with odour complaints; and producers sharing farm solutions to control odours.
- **Break-out Sessions** – Sessions are intended to be interactive, with session participants having an opportunity to ask questions and participate in the discussion on topics ranging from odour control, water quality and animal production, methods of manure treatment and how to do a nutrient management plan.

"The conference provides many opportunities to hear about and see what other producers are doing in their operation, and to talk to producers and experts in small group sessions about specific issues," adds Fitzgerald. "Participants will leave with ideas, information and technologies that they can take home and immediately apply to their farm operation."

To register for Manure Management 2000 Conference call the RITE operator at 310-0000 and ask for the Alberta Agriculture Strathmore office, or call direct (403)934-3355. You can also contact any Alberta Agriculture office to get a registration

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brochure, or go to the Alberta Agriculture website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/manure2000>**.

Contact: *Darcy Fitzgerald*
(403) 340-4822

Teens talk safety on TV

Teens talking to teens about farm safety is the concept behind the It's Cool campaign.

Alberta rural junior high and high school students were challenged to producing a farm safety commercial. Their creativity gave them a chance to compete for a $2,500 scholarship and a video camera for their school. The deadline for submissions was April 15, 2000 and the winning commercial was aired for the first time during a Hockey Night in Canada play-off broadcast.

"We received 15 submissions from rural Alberta students," says Eric Jones, farm safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm safety program, Edmonton. "We were very pleased with the quality of the submissions. These young Albertans really put a lot of thought and effort into their 30 second commercial spots."

The winning submission was made by Rob Dewitt, Beaverlodge Regional High School. Dewitt was awarded the $2,500 scholarship and a video camera for his school. Second place, a $1,500 scholarship went to Jeff Pankonin and Darrell Knelsen from the Lethbridge Christian School. Third place, a $1,000 scholarship, was awarded to Nicole Mushanuik from the St. Mary's School in Vegreville.

It's Cool is part of the farm safety campaign and is sponsored by CBC Television and PanCanadian Petroleum Limited.

Every year, a number of teens in Alberta are hurt or killed in farm accidents. PanCanadian Petroleum Limited, CBC Television and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are committed to farm safety and to finding the most effective ways of promoting farm safety for all Albertans and especially young Albertans.

"Thinking about and practicing safety should be first and foremost when working around farm equipment and livestock," says Jones. "Taking the time and precautions to work safely around the farm is the underlying message for all farm safety programs and never more so than when talking to or with young Albertans."

"We are pleased to be involved in such a positive campaign that delivers such an important message to all those involved in farming and ranching in the province," says Brian Gray, network sales manager for CBC Television in Alberta.

"We're proud to sponsor a program that aligns so closely with our commitment to safety education," says Charline Boudreau, director of Community Investment at PanCanadian. CBC will be airing Dewitt's 30 second commercial throughout the next several months. It delivers a powerful message to all Albertans – ***A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow!***

Contact: *Eric Jones*
(780) 427-4231
Brian Gray
(780) 468-2352
Charline Boudreau
(403) 716-4007

Successful Agri-preneurs develop customer focus

A market focus means targeting a business to a specific customer. It also means understanding the market forces that affect that business. Market forces include competition, suppliers, political forces and technology change. Use these quick tips to speed up market focus scanning.

Competition - take a sheet of paper and label four columns across the top: strengths, weaknesses, price and products. Down the side of the page list four or five main competitors. Don't forget to include your business in the chart so you can compare yourself to the competition. Do some in-store research and talk to the customers of competitors to ensure you fill the quick chart out as completely as possible.

Suppliers - make another similar quick chart. Across the top of this page, label the four columns: price, delivery, service and technical or design advice. Down the side of the page list up to four suppliers who are being or will be used. Depending upon the business you may need to prepare a quick chart for suppliers of raw and/or processed materials, distribution channels, technical advice and packaging goods. This quick chart is a great way to do some shopping for the businesses that can make a difference to the way it operates.

Political forces - make sure you know which laws affect your business. When developing an agri-business, you need to understand how the federal, provincial and municipal governmental regulations affect the business. If using a Farmers' Market, there are provincial and municipal regulations to comply with. Consider what you are planning to grow or prepare for customers. Many commodity organizations have regulations or guidelines. There are provincial standards for products sold within the province and federal laws for products sold outside the province. For more information on regulations that could affect your business contact an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development rural development specialist-business.

Technology change – technology is changing the way things are made and the types of products that can be made. Do some research to see if there are any changes in process or product technology that could change your business plan.

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Combine your assessment of the market forces that affect the agri-business with the customer profile. The two will help define the market focus. A well-defined market focus means a greater chance of business success.

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Caring for roses

There are many gardening techniques that can be used to keep roses healthy and increase their blooming potential. One of the most basic things to remember is that roses need to be pruned.

"Prune hybrid teas, grandiflorus and floribundas when you plant them and again when the winter protection is removed," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South (CDCS), Brooks. "Eliminate all but three to five of the strongest canes cutting these back to four to six buds per cane."

As a flower stem or faded flower is removed from the plant, the cut is made just above the next outward facing flowering shoot, which is usually purplish red in color. Remember that it takes at least seven leaves to make enough food to produce a flower.

Root stock suckers should be removed at ground level. Suckers are easily recognized due to their seven-leaflet leaves.

"Shrub roses are pruned similar to any spring flowering shrub. Thinning out wood older than four years and heading back certain stems to keep the plants tidy is all that is necessary," adds Barkley. "Miniature roses need little pruning except for removing weak shoots and tip pruning."

Diligent inspection and management of insect pests of roses is also essential. Common insect pests of roses include aphids, rose slugs, spider mites, thrips and rose weevil.

Aphid feeding can cause a yellowing curling or puckering of the leaves. They secrete a sticky honeydew that attracts ants. Aphids are either winged or wingless, soft bodied and pear shaped. Also they can be a variety of colors – green to black Aphids are generally found on the new growth and leaf undersides

Spider mites cause a mottled yellow appearance to the foliage This foliage will drop prematurely. Mite infestations are often recognized by the webbing on the leaf underside since the insects are small and very hard to see.

"Rose weevils feed on the unopened flower buds causing them to drop off or fail to bloom at all," says Barkley. The adult weevil has a black head and long snout with a red body. The larva develops in the hip of the rose. This pest can be devastating in a rose garden.

"Gall forming wasps infest the crowns and stems of roses forming galls. These galls should be pruned off when they are noticed. Rose slug closely resembles the pear slug in appearance and feeding habits. This insect skeletonizes the leaves of the plant, turning them brown. These slugs are yellowish green.

"Many gardeners wonder what kind of rose grows the best in Alberta and is the easiest to care for," says Barkley. "Shrub roses are ideal for gardeners who want the beauty and fragrance of roses, but do not want the extra care required with Hybrid Teas. These roses are able to survive Alberta winters without extra protection although some spring pruning may be necessary to remove dead wood. Shrub roses vary in size from low growing to very tall making these plants adaptable to many landscaping situations."

Many of the old standby cultivars bloom only once during the spring or summer, in comparison, the new varieties can bloom continuously from late spring to first frost. Some may bloom only on two-year-old wood and older. Many have good autumn color and prominent hips, a few even have red foliage throughout the growing season.

"Canadian plant breeders have been busy developing new hardy roses," adds Barkley. "The Explorer series was developed in Ontario using hardy parent stock to produce hardy offspring. Disease resistance was also bred into these plants. Roses in the Explorer series are named after the early Canadian Explorers. Some Red Explorer roses are: Alexander Mackenzie, Champlain and Charles Albanel, Pink Explorers include Jens Munk and William Baffin, and Henry Hudson is a white cultivar."

The Agriculture Canada Research Station at Morden, Manitoba, has developed the Parkland series. These roses have a native prairie rose as a parent. Adelaide Hoodless, Cuthbert Grant, Morden Fireglow and Morden Amorette are red Parkland roses. Pink ones include Morden Blush and Morden Centennial.

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"There are the old standby hardy shrub roses like Hansa, Harrisons Yellow, Betty Bland, Pink Grootendorst, and Red Leafed Rose," says Barkley. "These hardy shrub roses will reward any gardener with color and fragrance with little effort."

Alberta Yards and Gardens: What to Grow, an Alberta Agriculture publication, has a section on roses, their care and plant descriptions. This book is available for sale at all Alberta district offices and at the Publications Office, located in the J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Cost of the publication is $15 plus GST (add $2 plus GST for shipping and handling).

Contact: Shelley Barkley
(403) 362-1305

Good greenhouse management means good bedding plants

This is the bedding plant season and people are already flocking to the greenhouses and buying plants for their gardens, flower beds and window boxes.

"A visit to local greenhouses is a source of pleasure and enjoyment. Hanging baskets are full and blooming," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist, at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN), Edmonton. "Growers are working hard to keep the plants healthy and green so that purchasers buy the healthiest, hardiest plants possible."

Alberta growers offer a wide variety of plants. Geraniums come in many different colors, are easy to care for and are pleasing to the eyes. Tuberous and fibrous begonias in pots and in hanging baskets give a feeling of coolness to their surroundings.

"Greenhouse growing is challenging and growers must diligently monitor and manage their crops. Growers often find that as plants grow, so grow the diseases," adds Dr. Piara Bains, plant pathologist at CDCN. "Greenhouse bedding plants are grown at high density causing high relative humidity and warm temperatures – very favourable conditions for the development of many diseases."

Botrytis fungus, commonly called Grey Mold, is a good example of a pathogen that growers watch for. This fungus thrives on geranium flowers, lower leaves of begonias and many other plants and could become devastating if air movement is not improved.

Growers must also watch for tomato spotted wilt virus that can attack begonias, impatients, petunias and many other plant species. "This is a thrip transmitted virus and typical symptoms may appear as brown, necrotic spots on the upper surface of leaves," says Bains. "These spots may join together and appear as large, burned out, scalded areas on begonias and render the plant unsaleable. The early symptoms of this virus may appear more like a mosaic on younger leaves. Plants may lose vigor and eventually be stunted. Good sanitation practices and controlling of thrips are the two most important strategies to control the spread of this virus."

Sound management practices can make a big difference in the quality of bedding plants.

Contact:	*Dr. Piara Bains*	*Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza*
	(780) 415-2302	*(780) 415-2303*

Investor education for Albertans

A grant awarded by the Alberta Capital Market Foundation to the Investor Learning Centre of Canada (ILC) has enabled the ILC to donate a variety of investment books to every Alberta public library.

ILC was established in 1996 and is Canada's only independent and not-for-profit educational organization dedicated to providing non-promotional and easy-to-understand investment information to the Alberta public. It is funded through revenues from its low-cost programs and by a grant from the Canadian Securities Institute.

The Alberta Capital Market Foundation, established in 1998, funds projects to educate the public and entrepreneurs about investing and capital formation. The books and support materials purchased by ILC with the grant monies received have already been shipped to Alberta libraries.

"As well as the books and printed resource materials available in public libraries, the project includes an outreach component to inform the public and media of the availability of these resources," says Karen Harrison, coordinator, Calgary Resource Centre. "Albertans also have access to assistance from the ILC's Calgary Resource Centre and its expert staff."

Albertans can contact the ILC's experts by calling the toll free number 1-877-989-2999 or through e-mail **<alberta@investorlearning.ca>**.

Contact: Karen Harrison
(403) 269-9923

Agri-News Briefs

Raising organic pasture poultry

There are several reasons why some producers are choosing to rear pasture poultry. It is an alternative way to grow poultry, the birds are handled in a low-stress manner, are always in fresh air and on new grass after three weeks of age. Organic pasture poultry are not administered medications and are not fed any foods that contain by-products. The pasture they are kept on is herbicide and pesticide free and all supplemental feed must also be herbicide and pesticide free. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has produced an Agri-Facts factsheet, Raising Organic Pasture Poultry (Agdex 450/20-2) to help growers interested in raising pasture poultry. The factsheet provides information on breeds, brooding, feeding, pasture penning, shipping, certification and choosing a slaughter facility. This factsheet is available free of charge at any Alberta Agriculture district office and from the publications office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Fruit growers field day

The Fruit Growers Society of Alberta (FGSA) is sponsoring a field day at the Meyer farm in Claremont, just outside Grande Prairie, on June 24, 2000. The day includes a tour of established northern Alberta Saskatoon orchards; a handling, cleaning and cooling facility; a look at an innovative planned expansion of an orchard; demonstration of an automatic computerized irrigation system, game fencing; and discussion on techniques used to revitalize an orchard. A charter bus has been booked and leaves Edmonton at 6:00 a.m. and returns at approximately 11:00 p.m. There are only 47 seats available on the bus, so early registration is advised. The Meyer's will accommodate anyone wishing to drive up on their own or camp overnight as long as arrangements are made in advance. Cost of the field day including the bus fare is adults $50/person; children under 16 years $30/child. Cost of the field day, not including bus, is $20/person. For further information, contact Wilf Litwin at (780) 992-1934 or Nadine Stielow at (780) 998-1313.

Quest for the Best comes to Olds

The $5,000 ***Quest for the Best***, the third annual North American Equine Ranching Information Council (NAERIC) Ranch Horse Classic Competition and Sale is scheduled for Saturday, October 21, 2000 at the Cow Palace in Olds. The ***Quest*** is a competition to identify and reward the well-broke, versatile and athletic all-around ranch horse. All horses in the competition must be at least four years old as of January 1, 2000. All horses will be examined by a veterinarian and/or drug tested. The competition consists of 10 required pattern elements. Two judges independently score the horses based on points per element of the competition, athletic ability and desire to work. The AQHA Official Handbook of Rules (January 1, 2000) serves as the official guide. Cash prizes and trophies are given as follows: first place – $2,000; second place – $1,000; third place – $750; fourth place – $500; and, fifth place – $250. Trophy blankets are awarded to the top three finishers. NAERIC will double purses earned by horses enrolled in the $1 million NAERIC Incentive Program. All competing horses are required to be sold in the subsequent auction sale. The nomination fee for the competition and auction sale is $200. Ranch horse prospects that are two-years-old or older, will be accepted to complement the competition horses to a maximum of 60 horses for sale. The nomination fee for the auction sale only is $100. All horses offered for sale will come with a four-day, money-back guarantee. For ***Quest for the Best*** competition and auction sale terms information, contact Ken Budvarson or Jack Daines at (403) 728-3493 or (403) 227-3166 or e-mail <barukay@telusplanet.net>. For information about NAERIC and the $1 million NAERIC Incentive Program, visit the NAERIC website at <**www.naeric.org**>.

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Agri-News

June 5, 2000

Evaluation and demonstration of herbaceous perennials

In spring 1999, a new demonstration research project, ***An evaluation and demonstration of herbaceous perennials***, was developed in cooperation between the Nursery Crops Program at CDC South, the Landscape Alberta Nursery Trades Association Retailers and the Calgary Zoo.

"Herbaceous perennial plants are currently the fastest growing part of the retail sector of the nursery/landscape trades in Alberta," says Dr. Christine Murray, research horticulturalist – nursery crops with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Brooks. "Retailers indicate that perennial sales have grown as much as 400 per cent in the last five years. The perennial trial garden project will help answer many questions, including: With hundreds of species and thousands of cultivars of herbaceous perennials, where does a retailer, grower, landscaper or gardener begin? What are the landscape qualities and hardiness under Alberta conditions for many of the new perennial species and cultivars?"

The perennial trial garden project is located at the Calgary Zoo in the Dorothy Harvie Gardens. This location provides an excellent environment to evaluate new untested perennials under a very harsh environment that is subject to Chinook winds. The Zoo is very accessible to nursery and landscape professionals and the Zoo and gardens are host to an average of 580,000 visitors from May to September each year. This location provides a unique opportunity to educate and interest the public while collecting data on the perennials.

The 30 m x 7 m trial garden is located along the south side of the Dorothy Harvie Gardens. In 1999, approximately 165 different species and cultivars of herbaceous perennials were planted into the fully landscaped setting and labelled to increase the educational value of the project.

"This spring data is being collected on the plant survival over the winter," adds Murray. "Over the summer, further data will be collected on plant height, spread, susceptibility to insect and disease problems, bloom dates and flower colour. Perennials that are known to grow well in Calgary have been used as controls to which the new cultivars are being compared. This is a low maintenance garden to reflect the environment in a home garden. If a species or cultivar requires a lot of extra care because of insect or disease problems the information will be collected and will affect the quality rating for the plant."

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The project will continue until 2001 and then information will be published for the industry and the public to use. As the interest in herbaceous perennials continues to grow this project may only be the beginning.

When planning some of your summer entertainment this year, make sure to include a visit to the Calgary Zoo and the perennial garden project.

Contact: *Dr. Christine Murray*
(403) 362-1313

National Aquaculture Recirculation workshop

The Alberta Fish Farmers Association (AFFA) is sponsoring a major workshop and trade show at the Lethbridge Community College on July 13 to July 15, 2000. The purpose of the workshop and trade show is to provide fish farmers from Alberta and other western Provinces and States with information on the latest recirculation technology in use in the aquaculture industry in Canada and other countries.

Experts from industry and government, across Canada and outside the Country, representing industry and government will be presenting information. Topics include: tanks, heating/temperature control, filtration, dissolved gas management, monitoring, disease, nutrition, waste treatment, managing recirculation systems and aquaponics. Yves Bastien, the Commissioner for Aquaculture for Canada, will attend the workshop and address the participants. Participants will also have an opportunity to visit recirculation facilities in southern Alberta.

"There is an increasing amount of interest from our members in looking at recirculation as an option for their operations" stated John Bjornson, president of the AFFA. "In addition to reducing water requirements, the use of recirculation gives farmers much more control of their operations. This includes vital areas such as health management and effluent treatment. Recent technological advances make recirculation a reasonable option from an economic point of view. This was not the case some years ago."

The Event is being co-ordinated with the Canadian Aquaculture Institute and Northern Aquaculture, companies that sponsored a similar workshop in Moncton, New Brunswick, in February 1999. The Moncton workshop drew more than 200 participants from eastern Canada and the U. S. as well as several from western Canada.

Organization for the Lethbridge event was carried out by a committee of industry and government officials including representatives from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, PFRA, the National Research Council and Lethbridge Community College. Participants at the workshop will be able to stay in the modern residences at the College during the three-day period.

To register for the workshop or trade show, contact Cheryl Reiger, Lethbridge Community College at 403 382 6991 or by e-mail <**cdregier@raptor.lethbridgec.ab.ca**>. Mainly due to sponsorship, it has been possible to keep fees for this national workshop to a minimum of $100 plus GST, Please register early, as space is limited.

Contact: *Victoria Page*
Secretary Treasurer
Alberta Fish Farmers Association
(403) 804-7586
vpage@nucleus.com

Eric Hutchings
Aquaculture biologist
Alberta Agriculture
(403) 381-5574

Market research tips

There's no magic to market research. It's not a crystal ball that can predict future sales with certainty. But, research can provide information to help project future trends, understand better what product or service people want and plan a marketing program for an agri-business

Effective market research involves several factors. Some of these include:

Prepare a product/service definition: be specific when describing the size, quality, product mix, variety or type of agri-product to be sold. Describe how delivery, processing, packaging or other services that accompany the product will be handled. If planning to develop an agri-service, describe the range of services offered.

Prepare market research objectives: prepare a list of all the decisions you will need to make in the agri-business. Use each decision to create one or several market research objectives. A well-written objective needs to be clear, concise, complete and realistic.

Collect extra information: the more research you can do yourself means less money being paid to consultants. You'll also gain a deeper understanding of both your customers and competition.

Secondary research is the easiest and least expensive way to get market information. It's useful for demographics (age, size, growth or family structures), consumption (how many kilos of beef/person/year) or future market trends. Head to the library, government offices, chambers of commerce, universities, trade magazines and computer databases to find many sources of secondary information.

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Primary research comes from talking to target customers over the phone, in person or through a mail-out survey. It can also be done by going to stores to count the number of products, people or events that relate to your agri-business. You may decide to hire a market consultant to design a survey targeted to your specific agri-business.

Assess your information: review the market research objectives to see if you have the right information and if it provides the detail needed. Beware of contradictions or holes in the information. If these appear, more information is needed.

Decision time: once you have information to answer your agri-business questions, it's time to make decisions. Pull out your decision list, review the information and make your decisions. It's alright to shelve an idea when research shows it won't work. If this happens review the information with an eye for new opportunities that may emerge.

For more information, contact the local rural development specialist-business:

Kerry Engel	Westlock	(780) 349-4465
Lori-Jo Graham	Claresholm	(403) 625-1445
Lisa Houle	Hanna	(403) 854-5500
Sharon Homeniuk	Stony Plain	(780) 963-6101
Tim Keating	Falher	(780) 837-2211
Slav Heller	St. Paul	(780) 645-6301
Donna Fleury	Airdrie	(403) 948-8537
Janice McGregor	Morinville	(780) 939-4351
Leona Reynolds-Zayak	Vermilion	(780) 853-8101
Linda Hawk	Medicine Hat	(403) 529-3616
Lynn Stegman	Lacombe	(403) 782-3301
Jan Warren	Vulcan	(780) 485-2236
Marian Williams	Camrose	(780) 679-1210

This is the fifth article in ***Market Driven Agriculture ... Strategies for Success***, a series on how to develop a market focus in your business. The articles are presented by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in partnership with Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association, and will appear in Agri-News weekly for the next two months. For more business and market development information check the Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association websites at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/diversify**> and <**www.awei.ab.ca**>.

Contact: Donna Fleury
(403) 948-8537
e-mail: donna.fleury@agric.gov.ab.ca

Avoidable health hazard

When it comes to preparing food and eating it, clean hands are a must. This is especially true of people who work around or with cattle. E Coli bacteria can be transmitted to food from unwashed hands.

"Food safety is something many people take for granted," says Linda St. Onge, food scientist and nutritionist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Leduc. "Small, simple things like washed hands, clean utensils, clean working area, taking steps to avoid cross-contamination of foods and cooking meats such as hamburger thoroughly, do make a difference."

In the Spring 2000 issue of ***Farm Family Health*** (Volume 8, Number 1) Health Canada, Laboratory Centre for Disease Control had some very good information on the subject.

Failure to carefully wash your hands, especially after working around and with cattle, can lead to infection with a type of *E. coli* bacteria, called *verocytotoxigenic escherichia coli* (VTEC). The resulting illness occasionally causes kidney failure and, in rare cases, death. Although not all animals carry this strain of the bacteria, there is no way to tell without extensive lab testing.

Dairy farm families are exposed to high levels of bovine VTEC through direct contact with cattle and cattle manure. A 1992-93 study of 80 dairy farms in southern Ontario revealed that a substantial number had evidence of current or past infection on the basis of stool cultures. In addition, 53.8 per cent of participants had antibodies for VTEC in their blood, indicating a past infection.

Recent studies show that VTEC is also transmitted through consumption of unpasteurized milk and other dairy products, and improperly washed vegetables from a garden fertilized with fresh (uncomposted) manure. The bacteria may also spread from person to person, particularly in households and institutions such as nursing homes or daycare centres. Careful washing of hands, utensils and other personal objects is necessary to avoid spreading the bacteria from cattle to humans and among people.

E. coli is found in the intestines of a number of animals, including cattle and humans. When ingested, usually in the form of improperly cooked ground beef contaminated with bovine feces at slaughter, VTEC bacteria cause hamburger disease with symptoms of stomach cramps and bloody diarrhoea appearing two to eight days later. These symptoms last seven to ten days. In Canada, five cases of hamburger disease per 100,000 people were reported in 1995, the most recent year for which complete data are available. In some cases, especially among people with immature or weakened immune systems, such as children or the elderly, infection with this bacteria leads to hemolytic uremic syndrome – kidney failure.

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There are several simple ways to stop the spread of E. coli bacteria:

- Wash your hands well with soap and a nail brush before preparing foods and after handling raw meat, working with cattle, tending an infected person and using the toilet.
- Drink only pasteurized milk. Never let children sample raw milk from an animal.
- Drink water from a supply known to be safe. If you have a private water supply (well) it should be tested several times a year. Never drink water from a lake, river or open spring unless you know it is safe.
- Refrigerate or freeze meat as soon as possible after buying it and then thaw frozen meat in the refrigerator, not on the counter.
- Prepare raw hamburger patties or other meat quickly, then cook them right away, or put them in the refrigerator. Don't let raw meat sit out.
- Wash and sanitize counter tops, cutting boards and utensils after contact with raw meats and poultry, especially before using these areas for preparation of ready-to-eat foods. Use hot soapy water to wash, rinse with water, and then sanitize with household bleach.
- When barbecuing or cooking meat such as hamburger, pork or chicken, the meat should be thoroughly cooked at the centre. Meat and juices should be brown, not pink or red – check to make sure.
- Place cooked meat on clean plates. Don't re-use dishes that have been in contact with raw meat.
- Serve cooked meat immediately or keep it hot (60° C or 140° F). Don't let cooked meat sit out.
- Refrigerate leftover meat as soon as possible after the meal.
- Anyone known to be infected with E. coli – suffering from "hamburger disease" – should not share dishes, cutlery or glasses with anyone else. Their towels, face cloths and bedding should be washed separately in hot water and bleach. Use approximately 100 mL (1/3 cup) of bleach per 20 L (5 gallons) of wash water.

More information on farm family health issues are included on the Health Canada, Laboratory Centre for Disease Control website at < **http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca:80/hpb/lcdc/publicat/farmfam/vol8-1/ff8-1k_e.html** >

Contact: *Linda St. Onge*
(780) 980-4873

The 4 B's of successful marketing

"Albertans involved in a horticultural operation such as u-pick, market garden, greenhouse, landscape or tree nursery know that effective marketing is critical to profitability," says Janice McGregor, rural development specialist - business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Morinville.

Here are some factors that, if implemented, will contribute to marketing success.

Being the Best: Consumers today expect quality. Mediocrity is not acceptable! It is essential to be the best in all facets of business and provide quality products, quality service and quality after-sales support. Looking after the little things will make your business stand out from the competition. This is done by:

- providing the best products. Constantly enhance the quality of your products whether it is bedding plants, seedlings, fresh cut or dried flowers, vegetables, fruits, fresh or dried herbs and herbal products. Be ruthless in your quality control and sell only your top quality products. You may find other uses or outlets for lesser quality products, but make sure that you mark or label the products as lower quality and reduce your prices accordingly. If you try to sell inferior products at the same prices or to the same customers you will damage your reputation as a seller of quality products. It is important to implement a quality assurance program on your farm to ensure the integrity of your products.
- providing the best service. Do everything possible to make it easy for your customers to do business with you. Make it easy for them to find you by being listed in the phone book and appropriate industry publications or directories. You might even want to get together with other producers in your area to develop a local directory or farm tour map that could direct urban customers to your farm. Be sure to include all the information your customers need to contact you: name, farm name, phone number, fax, e-mail, address and land location.
- making it easy for people to get information about your products by developing informative brochures, catalogues, website etc. It should be easy for customers to order and pay for products with credit cards and on- line orders. Provide delivery services for your products if appropriate. Some seed companies send their products through Canada Post, UPS etc. Reduce the risk to your customers by providing satisfaction guarantees.
- developing and keeping good records on all your products and be willing to share them with your customers if requested. Finally, provide the best after-sales support by educating your customers and providing them with product

Cont'd on page 5

information and support such as recipes, processing tips, nutrition, seed bed preparation, watering, harvesting etc. Being the best requires commitment, time and effort, but the rewards will be well worth it

Branding: Along with being the best, products and services should be branded. Branding helps differentiate your products from the crowd. Pick a good brand name for the product. Try to pick a brand name that also has an Internet domain name available. That way an Internet presence can be established as well. Once a brand name is chosen, promote it vigorously and aggressively through all signs and print materials.

Bundling: This refers to being able to buy all related products and services in one place. If you sell seeds or seedlings at your greenhouse, additional sales can be built by offering gardening equipment, gardening books, yard accessories and clothing for sale. It makes it easier and more convenient for customers if they can get everything they need in one place. This also includes related services such as planting trees purchased from the business, arranging a customer's cut flowers in a vase, and drawing a landscape plan for a customer's yard. You can charge for these services. When customers can get everything they need from one place that business can build a competitive advantage over others.

Bonding: People like to buy from people, not companies or organizations. Bonding means establishing good relationships with customers. In marketing literature there is a lot written about relationship marketing. This is a term for what businesses used to do before the advent of megastores. Store owners knew their customers by name and a lot about their wants and needs. They provided them with personalized service.

Get to know your customers and earn their trust. The number one reason people will buy from you is because they trust you. Earn it! When dealing with your customers, always be completely honest, don't hide anything from them, keep promises, be willing to listen and take immediate steps to address any concerns or complaints.

"Satisfied customers are the best source of word-of-mouth advertising, which is one of the most effective (and cheapest) forms of marketing," adds McGregor. "It also works in reverse! Dissatisfied customers will spread the word quickly and could eventually kill your business.

"By implementing these four business basics you can increase your chances of operating and growing an effective, customer focused business."

For more information on marketing and promoting your agricultural products please contact a rural development specialist - business through the government RITE system at 310-0000.

Contact: *Janice McGregor*
(780) 939-4351

CDCS – 65 years young

The Crop Diversification Centre South (CDCS), a provincial research facility, is celebrating its 65th anniversary this year

"Prior to its transfer to the province from the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1935, the CPR had operated two experimental farms in Brooks to promote the practice of diversified farming to settlers in the area," says Dr. Ron Howard, director, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's CDCS, Brooks.

The many achievements of the Provincial Horticultural Station and its later namesakes are being celebrated on July 28, 2000 when former staff, special guests and the general public are invited to attend an open house at the CDC South. The day will feature tours of the research facilities, dedications of a sundial and time capsule, and plenty of reminiscing.

"Former Director Tom Krahn has written a history of the Centre entitled ***From the Bald Prairie*** and autographed copies should be available at the open house," adds Howard

Following are some excerpts from the book:

Since its inception in 1935, the Centre has led the way in the development of applied research and extension programs for the horticultural and special crops industries in Alberta. This history pays tribute to the Centre's leaders and staff and their many partners, both industry and government, whose insightful and determined efforts have contributed to the success of these flourishing industries.

The Canadian Pacific Railway's Demonstration and Headquarters Farms in Brooks gained prominence in the area as centres for research and demonstration. Farm staff would help new settlers make their homesteads more comfortable and hospitable; they would contribute greatly to the permanent establishment of communities in the south. The Farms' contributions to horticulture and agriculture must have been especially welcome in the bleak days of the Depression.

The first plants transplanted on the Headquarters Farm were chokecherries, saskatoons, gooseberries, bullberries and violets taken from the banks of the Red Deer River. In 1919, 7- to 15-foot cottonwoods were transplanted from the Gregory Ferry area. That same year, 400 poplars from the CPR Forestry Branch were planted along the streets of Brooks by its residents. While still a very young community, the town of Brooks made it onto the horticultural map of Alberta and became known as "The Town That Says It With Trees."

For more information on the Centre's open house, please contact Shelley Barkley at (403) 362-1305 or Mayumi Tanigami-Bunney at (403) 362-1307.

Contact: *Shelley Barkley*
(403) 362-1305
Mayumi Tanigami-Bunney
(403) 362-1307

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Agri-News Briefs

Hands On Solutions

The ***Hands On Solutions – Manure Management 2000*** conference, being held on June 26 to 28, 2000 in Calgary is planned with the producer in mind. Issues will be discussed to provide participants with hands on solutions to the everyday and technical issues surrounding the livestock industry. Participants at the conference will receive accurate and timely information that provides solutions to everyday and technical issues in a hands-on, interactive fashion. The conference includes plenary sessions on key topics that include producers as speakers, site tours and demonstrations, a manure management and odor program and break-out sessions. The conference will benefit livestock producers and anyone who has manure or who uses manure on their farm. The primary focus of the conference is on nutrient management planning and how to use manure as a resource to save money. The conference provides many opportunities to hear about what other producers are doing in their operations, and to talk to producers and experts in small group sessions about specific issues. To register for Manure Management 2000, contact the Alberta Agriculture Strathmore office at (403) 934-3355 or contact any Alberta Agriculture office to get a copy of the registration and information brochure. Alberta government numbers are toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000 first. Information is also posted on the Alberta Agriculture website at: <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/manure2000**>.

Farm water systems

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has produced a series of factsheets dealing with many aspects of farm water systems. Whether a new system is being planned and designed or an existing system up-graded, these factsheets can provide information and options farm managers will find helpful. The series consists of factsheets on:

- Float Suspended Intake – Agdex 716 (B34)
- Choosing a Water Pump – Agdex 716 (C10)
- Deep Well Jet Pumps – Agdex 716 (C11)
- Shallow Well Jet Pumps – Agdex 716 (C12)
- Submersible Pumps – Agdex 716 (C14)
- Pump Houses – Agdex 716 (C28)
- Pasture Pipeline Design – Agdex 716 (C44)
- Frost Free Yard Hydrants – Agdex 716 (C51)
- Automatic Livestock Waterers – Agdex 716 (C52)
- Thawing Frozen Hydrants, Waterers and Pipes – Agdex 716 (C19)
- Dissolved Gases in Well Water – Agdex 716 (D18)
- Pasture Water Systems – Agdex 716-3

Agri-Facts factsheets are available free at all Alberta Agriculture district offices and from the publications office,
7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Agri-News

June 12, 2000

Drinking water and E. coli

The E. coli break out in Walkerton, Ontario has sparked many questions about E. coli, water contamination and the safety of drinking water. E. coli is short for *Escherichia coli*. There are different kinds of E. coli, some harmful to humans and some not harmful.

"E. coli is normally found in the intestines of all mammals, humans, deer, domestic pets and livestock," says Dr. Gerald Ollis, head of agri-food surveillance systems branch with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "0157:H7 is one particular strain of E. coli. It is not known where E. coli 0157:H7 originated from, and at this point that isn't the major concern. How we deal with manure and water treatment is what counts."

0157:H7 was first identified in 1982. Scientists are unsure of how long it may have been in existence prior to that time. It has been identified in many mammals including cattle, deer and humans. Not all mammals cattle carry 0157:H7, but cattle have been identified as a primary reservoir.

Some facts:

- finding E. coli 0157:H7 is not determined by the intensity of a livestock operation but the number of carrier animals in that population. It follows that the more animals in an area, the more likely that one of them is a carrier;
- it's reasonable to expect that if there is a concentrated, large number of livestock, deer or humans, the chance of detecting E.coli 0157:H7 increases;
- 0157:H7 can be readily destroyed through high temperatures and proper water treatment procedures; and,
- the contamination in Walkerton appears to have occurred because of extraordinary circumstances (floods) aggravated by the failure of the water treatment facilities.

More information is available at the following websites:

- **http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpb/lcdc/publicat/farmfam vol8-1/ff8-1k_e.html**
- **http://cbc.ca/news/indepth/facts/ecoli.html**
- **http://www.ec.gc.ca/water/e_main.html**

Information on Alberta water processing standards or inspection can be obtained by contacting Alberta Environment Communications (780) 427-8636.

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Alberta
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Additional information is also available by contacting:

Dr. Gerry Predy, chief medical health officer,
Capital Health Region, (780) 413-7600

Dr. Les Gammie, director of quality assurance,
EPCOR – Water Treatment, (780) 412-7615

Contact: *Bard Haddrell*
Alberta Agriculture
Communications
(780) 427-2127

Davie Dear
Alberta Environment
Communications
(780) 427-8636

David Bray
Alberta Health & Wellness
Communications
(780) 427-7164

Alberta Government numbers are toll free by dialing 310-0000 first

Before you start, know the regulations

Before starting or expanding an agri-business, there are some regulations to be aware of. Agri-food businesses must comply with the *Public Health Act*. To learn about the *Public Health Act* check with your local Regional Health Authority. An agent working for the Regional Health Authority will provide the requirements for opening and operating a food establishment. They also issue the permits required to set up a food establishment, including operations such as a bed and breakfast.

All agri-business owners should contact their local municipal office before they start a new business or expand an existing one. A county, town or city office will issue the required business license and approve and issue building permits for new construction or renovation to existing buildings. If customers will be travelling to the farm business, it is necessary to understand sign bylaws, and roadway bylaws for allowance for right-of-way boundaries on primary and secondary highways.

Farmers' Markets provide an opportunity to sell agri-products directly to consumers. Before heading to the market, inquire with the local Regional Health Authority about the requirements for Farmers' Markets and food vendors at the market. Priority requirements include safe food handling of perishable foods and home canned foods. All meat and poultry must be inspected. Contact the Farmers' Market about their operating guidelines. Because requirements may differ, check with each Farmers' Market you plan to sell through.

Rules differ, depending on what commodities are grown or raised. Different rules and regulations affect the amount and the way an agri-product can be sold. Quotas regulate some agriculture commodities, other must meet standards, while others require inspection. Legislation affects the sale of some products. Take the time to check labeling and grading laws for each agri-product.Boards or commissions govern some commodities. Commissions and boards use the *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act* as a legal framework for their operations. A commission usually requires a license for dealers and collects service charges or check-offs. A board may have production controls and licenses, marketing services and service charges.

If planning to transport your agri-product across any boundaries check out federal marketing legislation to see if it applies.

A factsheet, ***Farm Direct Sales – Know the Regulations*** (Agdex 845-7) is a quick reference for finding out more about the regulations. Copies of the fact sheet are available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices and from the publications office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. The factsheet includes a handy table for each commodity with details on the agencies you need to check with.

This is the sixth article in ***Market Driven Agriculture ...Strategies for Success***, a series on how to develop a market focus in your business. The articles are presented by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in partnership with Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association, and will appear in Agri-News weekly for the next two months. For more business and market development information check the Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association websites at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/diversify**> and <**www.awei.ab.ca**>.

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Community issues surrounding livestock operations

Livestock operators face many issues in their communities. From water quality to increased public scrutiny, there is more pressure from outside sources on how livestock operations are managed.

"The ***Manure Management 2000 Conference*** is planned with the producer in mind," says Darcy Fitzgerald with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Red Deer. "The sessions will look at issues and will provide participants with hands-on solutions to the everyday and technical issues surrounding the livestock industry."

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Water quality:

- participants will learn how one community has worked together to resolve water quality issues. Livestock producers involved in the community watershed initiative will relate their experiences and share what they've done to resolve water quality issues. They will explain the benefits and costs of changing management practices to protect an important community resource;
- learn the facts about parasites in livestock manure and the risks or potential risks to the water supply for animal and human health. Find out what watering systems are available and how your pocket book and overall animal production can be affected;

Community Cooperation:

- an interactive session from *conflict to cooperation* covers the principles of preventing and resolving conflict. Understand why conflict occurs and the value of avoiding and resolving conflict;
- one of the most common community issues surrounding livestock operations is odour. Learn how odour complaints are dealt with in the community and find out what management practices three livestock producers are using to reduce odours in their operations;
- anyone thinking of expanding or developing a livestock operation will get the necessary tools to work successfully with neighbors and local government.

Hands On Solutions – Manure Management 2000 Conference is being held in Calgary, June 26-28, 2000 at the Coast Plaza Hotel. To register visit the conference website at: **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/manure2000>** or call the RITE operator at 310-0000 and ask for the Alberta Agriculture Strathmore office, or call direct (403)934-3355.

Contact: Darcy Fitzgerald
(403) 340-4822

Hot water injection heating for farm shops

An ideal way to control the heat in a hot water heated shop floor is to use a new concept called injection heating.

"In a hot water heating system using injection heating in the shop, the floor circuit flows continuously," says Robert Borg, agricultural engineer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Red Deer. "When the temperature of the floor heating water drops due to building heat loss, hot water is injected into the floor circuit. With this system, hot water can be pumped long distances through half-inch plastic pipes (similar concept to high voltage power lines) to various heating circuits. The diagram shows the concept of injection heating using three circuits: a primary hot water loop from the boiler, an injection circuit, and one of several possible floor heating circuits."

Features of injection heating include:

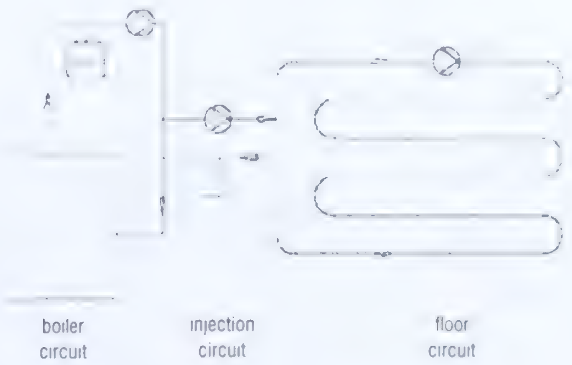
- lower cost for pipes and distribution pumps. Because of the large temperature difference between return water from the floor (usually about 100° F) and the boiler water (190-200° F), large amounts of heat can be transferred through small lines (1/2 inch pipe)
- boiler protection is improved with controls that prevent cold water return to the boiler. Cold water return can cause condensation and corrosion in the boiler.
- this system protects the floor from freezing if large doors are open next to the heated floor. With continuous floor circulation, there is enough heat stored in the concrete slab to last several days.
- injection heating is ideally suited to outdoor reset control. As outside temperature drops, the building loses more heat. With outdoor reset control, the water temperature in the heating circuit rises as the outside temperature drops.
- systems with a large thermal mass such as a concrete slab can be controlled with an on-off injection pump control.

As seen in the accompanying schematic, injection heating consists of three circuits:

Boiler circuit – the boiler circuit consist of a primary loop with continuously circulating hot water. Note the location of the pump, pumping away from the expansion tank. Piping to add water is attached near the expansion tank.

Injection circuit – the injection circuit consist of a pump that turns on or off depending on heat demand from the shop. The supply and return lines are located as close as possible. The pressure is then the same between supply and return preventing water flow when the pump is off. Hot water is injected into the cooler floor loop, while an equal amount of water flows back to the boiler.

Floor circuit – water is pumped continuously through the floor heating pipes. Pump size depends on the length of pipe in the floor.



Contact: Robert Borg (403) 340-5323

Intensive livestock operations report presented

After two years of extensive public consultations, a comprehensive report on a proposed regulatory framework for intensive livestock operations has been presented to the Alberta government.

The report contains recommendations for proposed legislation and regulations.

Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, received the report and expressed his appreciation to the Livestock Regulations Stakeholder Advisory Group who consulted with more than 700 Albertans on the issue.

"I understand the hard work that has gone into this report," says Lund. "We need to build a stronger consensus before we can proceed with legislation, but there are a number of initiatives that can be implemented in the short term."

Among the initiatives:

- an updated *Code of Practice for the Safe and Economic Handling of Animal Manures* to provide technical guidelines for the siting of new and expanding livestock operations.
- beneficial Management Practices guidelines for the livestock industry.
- development of an Environmental Self-Assessment and Certification Program to voluntarily identify and remedy on-farm problem areas.
- a peer review process to address public complaints related to livestock operations.
- development of education and management tools for responsible livestock operations.
- information for producers on designing and operating livestock facilities.
- development of nutrient management planning tools.
- research to improve manure management practices and construction of manure storage facilities.
- clarification of government agency roles and support related to research, compliance and education.

Agriculture, Food and Rural Development staff will continue to assist municipalities in reviewing development permit applications and providing technical support in the siting of intensive livestock operations.

"There are still a number of outstanding technical issues that must be resolved and we hope to address those through research," says Lund. "We will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of the livestock industry."

Copies of the complete report are available on the Alberta Agriculture website at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/ilo**> or by calling (780) 422-2522. Government numbers are toll-free in Alberta by first dialing 310-0000.

Contact:	*Michael Lohner*	*Dennis Glover*
	(780) 427-2137	*(780) 427-0674*

Insect update

In Alberta this season, some insects appear to be less of a problem than first thought. There are, however, several that are expected to create very serious problems.

The grasshopper forecast may be downgraded for 2000," says Lloyd Dosdall, provincial entomologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "First and second instar nymphs are around but few are of the destructive Melanoplus genus. The northern and southern parts of the province are currently expecting severe problems. The weather will be a major factor in determining their final numbers."

The orange blossom wheat midge has only been seen in Alberta to any significant degree near Lloydminster. The tiny fly like insect is only seen in the very late evening or night. Alberta Agriculture staff will be monitoring this pest carefully to ensure that growers can be warned if danger to their wheat crops arises.

Army cutworms have had minor influence this season, although there have been a few reports of damage to canola. Their feeding period is ending. However, an unusual outbreak of glassy cutworm has occurred in fescue crops in the Peace River region. This insect has not been previously known to attack fescue and timothy crops, but widespread damage and spraying have occurred this year.

"The cereal leaf beetle is present in the Creston Valley and in Montana," says Dosdall. "It will be impossible to keep this pest out of Alberta forever. For early detection, a monitoring program starts in southern Alberta in mid-June. If this pest shows up, attempts will be made to eradicate it before it spreads."

The cabbage seedpod weevil in canola has been found in large numbers on Brassica weeds. There appears to be a five-fold increase in their numbers over last year. Emergency registration of Decis has been applied for, but is not yet approved.

"Lygus bugs are present in much higher numbers than seen in 1999," adds Dosdall. "With a lot fewer acres of canola, the lygus bug may concentrate on the remaining fields. These bugs are good flyers and are known to infest alfalfa seed fields, too."

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Field scouting and monitoring is a management practice that can go a long way in alerting producers of the presence of pests at stages where preventative measures can make a difference.

Contact: Lloyd Dosdall
(780) 422-4911

Agri-News Briefs

Fall seeded crop school 2000

The Agronomy Unit of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission and the University of Alberta are sponsoring the Fall Seeded Crop School 2000 on June 21 and 22, 2000 at the U of A Research Farm in Ellerslie, just on the south side of Edmonton. Topics covered for winter wheat, winter triticale, fall rye and fall seeded canola include: fertilizer management, seeding rates and dates, seeding depths, crop staging, new seed coating technology, new varieties, weeds, insects and diseases. The two separate one-day sessions planned have a capacity limit of 60 participants for each day. Each day's session runs for approximately six hours. Reservations will be taken by phone or e-mail on a first come, first served basis. To reserve or for further information, contact Michele Dannish at (780) 422-3825, e-mail **<michele.dannish@agric.gov.ab.ca>**.

FGSA field days

The Fruit Growers Society of Alberta is sponsoring two field days in Alberta this summer. The field day north at the farm of Arnie and Susan Meyer at Claremont, just outside of Grande Prairie and the field day south on July 15, 2000 at the farm of Paul and Karen Hamer, Dewinton, just south of Calgary. Highlights of the north tour include: established northern Alberta saskatoon orchards; a handling, cleaning and cooling facility; an innovative planning expansion of an orchard; an automatic computerized irrigation system; game fencing; and techniques used to revitalize an orchard. Highlights of the south tour include: established southern Alberta saskatoon orchard; an on-farm processing facility; a large, established U-pick operation; an on-farm restaurant; a nursery and greenhouse operation with mail order; and, buffalo and buffalo products. Cost of the tours is $10 per person. For further information or to register, contact Wilf Litwin (780) 992-1934 or Nadine Stielow (780) 998-1313.

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Agri-News

June 19, 2000

Alberta's purple loosestrife eradication program

The Alberta purple loosestrife eradication program, is continuing in 2000 to ensure all known infestations of purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) are monitored and removed. The only way this can be achieved is through assistance from landowners along with the help of volunteers and agricultural field staff.

"Purple loosestrife is an attractive perennial, easily recognized by it's purple or pink vertical spike of flowers that blooms from July through September," says Jamie Motta, purple loosestrife eradication program coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "It was once sold by garden centres as an ornamental, but if this plant escapes from garden beds it can invade natural wetlands. Thousands of hectares of wetlands, pastures and riparian meadows are affected in North America each year with an economic impact of millions of dollars."

In 1991, Alberta representatives from concerned groups and organizations came together to form the purple loosestrife management committee. The committee's mandate is to develop strategies for the management and control of purple loosestrife. Since the birth of the purple loosestrife eradication program in 1994, the committee has promoted public awareness and co-ordinated eradication efforts where infestations occur. The program is very successful in keeping Alberta infestation levels at a minimum.

"Alberta has the potential to become totally purple loosestrife free," says Alberta Agriculture weed control specialist and chair of the management committee, Shaffeek Ali.

Dedicated volunteers are a key element to purple loosestrife eradication. Over the last six years, hundreds of conscientious individuals have put on their rubber boots and pulled, dug out and bagged several acres worth of this purple menace. Organized plant pulls are the most effective method to combat purple loosestrife in aquatic trouble spots. There are still no chemicals registered to control this noxious weed.

Several greenhouses and garden centres throughout the province participate in the purple loosestrife plant exchange program. All lythrum cultivars brought in to participating greenhouses will be exchanged for an alternate perennial plant for free or at a discount.

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This Week

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"Purple loosestrife is classified as a noxious weed under the *Alberta Weed Act*, if found by a weed inspector on private lands, a weed notice for removal will be issued to the property owner," adds Ali. "Failure to comply will result in the removal by the county or municipality at the owners expense."

When purple loosestrife is found please make a conscience effort to remove it.

Controlling purple loosestrife:

- plants should be dug out before seed productions, making sure that the roots and stems are removed to prevent re-growth of new roots and shoots;
- plant(s) should be placed in black garbage bags. Do not use clear bags or bags with holes;
- plant disposal can be done either by burning or burial in landfill sites. Purple loosestrife should never be composed due to it's potential for regeneration; and,
- if you have lythrum growing in your garden, please participate in the purple loosestrife exchange program.

To obtain a listing of greenhouses and garden centres participating in the plant exchange program, or to report escaped or garden plantings of this weed, please contact the local weed inspector, agricultural fieldman, or weed control specialist. The purple loosestrife eradication program coordinator can be contacted at (780) 422-4909 or (780) 422-7199. These government numbers are toll free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000.

For more information on purple loosestrife check out Alberta Agriculture's website: <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/pests/weeds/index.html**>

Contact: *Shaffeek Ali* *(780) 422-4909* *Jamie Motta* *(780) 422-7199*

Northeast grazing school

The Lakeland Agriculture Research Association (LARA) has organized a one-day grazing school dealing with the principles of grazing cultivated pastures. The school is being held on June 29, 2000 at the Bonnyville Agriplex.

"At the school, emphasizes will be placed on grazing alfalfa, the varieties to consider, management practices to keep alfalfa in permanent pastures and overall management of alfalfa/grass mixtures," says Guy Bonneau, with LARA, Bonnyville. "The Grazing School combines inside presentations and a visit to a grazing lease for field observations. The grazing lease being visited has a number of different alfalfa varieties mixed with different grasses and a research site that contains approximately 20 different varieties of alfalfa. The afternoon session will allow producers an opportunity to make assessments on pasture condition and on the riparian areas on the lease."

One of the featured speakers is Dr. Paul Hansen from Montana discussing riparian and wet land grazing principles. Wyatt Swanson will discuss his operation, including grazing of alfalfa stands from a producer perspective. Other topics include the grazing management of alfalfa, grazing economics, bloat prevention and research results on grazing tolerance of alfalfa varieties and commonly used grasses. These presentations will be given by producers, staff from the Agriculture industry and Alberta Agriculture.

The registration fee for the school is $20.00 (includes lunch and a barbecue in the evening). Pre-registration is required by June 27. Phone the LARA office at (780)826-7260 or the Lac La Biche Agriculture office at (780) 623-5218.

Contact: *Guy Bonneau*
(780)826-7099

Ag Summit 2000 kick-starts joint industry/government action

On June 7, 2000, more than 300 delegates from all areas of Alberta's agriculture and food industry closed the two-day meeting of Ag Summit 2000 at Edmonton's Mayfield Inn. Delegates spent close to 24 hours reflecting on input from 37 public meetings held since the process began in February.

The result was the creation of a number of action teams to move forward on key initiatives identified through this unique, collaborative, team-building process.

"The energy and momentum created through the Ag Summit process and this meeting has been just incredible," said Brian Heidecker, Ag Summit 2000 Co-Chair. "I am excited and encouraged about what this will mean for our industry."

Participants have agreed to work together in action teams to address each of the key initiatives and produce detailed implementation plans. The Design Team, a cross section of industry representatives involved in planning the Ag Summit 2000 process, will approach industry organizations to lead the development and implementation of the key action plans. These organizations will work with the action teams and engage the industry at large.

"The commitment to examine the industry has been tremendous," added Charlie Mayer, Ag Summit Co-Chair. "I'm impressed by the willingness of this industry to really look at what it needs to grow a new future for agri-food in Alberta."

A report-named ***The Prospectus*** will detail the Ag Summit 2000 discussions, common themes and proposed directions. *The Prospectus* will be distributed to delegates and the public in the coming weeks.

Cont'd on page 3

"I am really looking forward to seeing *The Prospectus*, to see where government can lend a hand to help move these action plans forward," said Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "This process has shown me once again that Alberta's agri-food industry is resilient, forward-thinking and ready for business in this new century."

Contact: *Janice Harrington*
(780) 908-3573

Will it sell?

Good marketing skills go beyond a target customer and a tailored agri-product or service. Producers and processors need to understand the market they will operate in by evaluating the market for the agri-product or service in question. To better understand the market, it's best to research market demand, competition, pricing and sales volume.

Market demand – do some research to estimate the number of target buyers and how often they purchase similar products or services. What is the size of the current market? Is it large or very restrictive? Where are the buyers? Local, global or somewhere in between? Think about the need for market education. If an agri-product is new, lead time will be needed to inform consumers about the product and it's benefits.

Competition – there is always competition in the marketplace. Even a new niche agri-product will have competition from substitutes. Assessing the competition provides a great deal of information about the market and customers.

Competition can be direct or indirect. Direct competition includes businesses that offer the same product or service and operate within a 100 km radius of your business. Indirect competition includes businesses that sell a different agri-product or service, but also a product that may be a direct substitute. It can be tough to assess indirect competition, especially for a generic product. Listing all the possible substitutes can be overwhelming. However, it's important to understand how customers may behave when they have many options.

Pricing – do some research to learn about competitor prices and price changes (if any) from season-to-season or year-to-year. Investigate how supply and demand, agri-product quality, marketing savvy and service affect prices. Before settling on a price, consider competition, costs of production, the level of quality, service, convenience and the nature of the target buyer.

Sales Volume – to set a reasonable sales volume, review information on target markets, marketing options, market demand, competition, trends and price. Use this information to project a sales volume for the agri-business during the start-up stage. Estimate the minimum and maximum volume of product you believe you can sell.

Next, project how much product or service will be sold in an average future year. An average future year is how the agri-business is expected to operate once it is well established and stabilized. Then set a sales goal for an average future year.

Get the most from marketing effort and dollars. Take the time to learn about the market before making agri-business decisions. Contact your local Alberta Agriculture office and ask for a copy of the factsheet ***Marketing: Will It Sell*** (Agdex 848-5). This factsheet is available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices and from the publications office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

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Diseases of essential oil crops in southern Alberta

More than 4,000 acres of mint, mostly peppermint and spearmint, are grown in southern Alberta. Mint yields about 86 kilograms of oil per hectare grown. Mint oil is widely used in various commercial products, such as beverages (herbal tea), chewing gums, cosmetics (soap), foods, medicinal cough preparations, mouthwashes and toothpastes.

Overall revenue from mint oil sales range up to $7 million per year, depending on the market price. Canadian mint oils have gained an excellent reputation for their high quality, largely due to the great differentiation between day and night temperatures in growing areas.

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"Mint is a perennial crop that can remain productive for five years or more, with the highest yield of essential oils occurring in the second and third production seasons," says Dr. Kan-Fa Chang, plant pathologist at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South, Brooks. "However, the acreage of peppermint has declined in recent years, despite its economic potential. Growers have been willing to expand production, but often were unable to do so due to the shortage of planting materials, stolon rot problems and winterkill, which have limited peppermint production in Alberta."

The winter kill phenomenon in peppermint is complicated and may not be simply explained solely by low winter temperatures.

"When underground portions of peppermint plants are examined in the early spring, stolons and crowns often show varying degrees of decay characterized by dark brown to black lesions with sharp borders between healthy and diseased tissues," explains Chang. "It appears that the straw mulch, required for winter survival in Alberta, encourages development of large white mycelial mats, which accompany severe rot symptoms in the stolons. Since no previous research work on mint stolon rot has been conducted in Canada, we are currently studying the role of this disease in winter kill of mint crops, with the support of the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute. Isolation and identification of microorganisms associated with rotted mint stolons is already in progress. Once the pathogenicity of these microorganisms has been confirmed, a controlled study will follow under field conditions."

Rust and powdery mildew also commonly occur as foliar diseases in Alberta mint fields. Severe infection with either disease can cause significant loss of mint oil production because badly infected leaves wither and drop off the plant. Producers can usually avoid heavy losses caused by these diseases by harvesting the crop early.

"Dill is also an important aromatic herb in southern Alberta, with approximately 1,000 acres under cultivation," adds Chang. "Leaves and seeds are mainly used for flavouring, the oil is used in cosmetics and perfumes, and the plant can also be used for medicinal purposes. The crop has occasionally been attacked by several minor diseases such as leaf spots, sclerotinia blight and aster yellows."

Contact: *Dr. Kan-Fa Chang*
(403) 362-1334
<kan.fa.chang@gov.ab.ca>

Competitive Advantage Program for agriculture

Starting in November 2000, managers of farms, ranches and other agriculture businesses in Alberta will have a unique opportunity to work closely with industry experts and colleagues to determine the competitive advantage of their businesses and develop a strategic plan to turn that advantage into larger profits.

"The ***Competitive Advantage Program*** is a joint project of the Agriculture Business Management Branch of Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development and Olds College," says Anita Lunden, Agriculture Business Management Branch with Alberta Agriculture and part of the management team for the program, Olds. "It involves 10 days of on-site classes and other activities at the Olds College Campus between mid-November and mid-January, plus on-line support and three days of one-to-one coaching. Every aspect of the program is geared to making the content applicable to the lives and businesses of participants."

As they go through the various modules of the course, participants will continuously apply the content to their own business through the development of a business plan. Advisors are on hand to help them during session in Olds and are accessible by phone and internet between sessions. The program covers strategic planning, financial, marketing and human resource management, and there are sessions on industry issues, use of technology and communication skills. Face to face sessions will be facilitated by a combination of staff from Alberta Agriculture and Olds College. There will be top level guest speakers, industry panels and group activities to keep things lively.

"Our goals is to provide farmers and ranchers in Alberta with a management program that was comprehensive, advanced and practical," says Lunden. "We're well on our way to achieving that goal."

Sessions in the first run of the program will be offered from November 14 to16, November 28 to 30 and December 12 to 14, 2000 and January 10, 2001. All these sessions will be at Olds College. Before, between and after these face to face sessions, participants can keep in touch with each other and with program coaches through the website.

"The Program came about largely through industry demand," adds Lunden who is also provincial co-ordinator for the Canada-Alberta Farm Business Management Program (FBMP). "For a number of years now, some of our leading FBMP participants have been telling us that we weren't offering some of the training they needed. They required more specific and advanced instruction and not as much introductory and basic information. This course goes a long way to filling that need and raising the bar in management practices.

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"As we were planning how to respond to these demands, the University of Saskatchewan offered an Agribusiness Development Program for Saskatchewan farmers and it was a sellout on both offerings. Their success gave us the confidence and the model to follow in developing the ***Competitive Advantage Program*** for Alberta."

For more information on the program contact Lunden or Dann Mattson at the Agriculture Business Management Branch (403) 556-4240, or Jamie Stanford at Olds College Extension Services (403) 556- 4738. Outside the Olds area, use the College toll free line 1-800-661-6537.

Contact: Anita Lunden
(403) 556-4240

Forage crop agreements

When buying or selling forages, negotiate the terms carefully and write them down. Verbal agreements can be misunderstood or misinterpreted and that can lead to problems. If the parties to the sale are fortunate, reason will prevail and a compromise can be found. But in cases where there is no common ground, the matter ends up in court being decided by legal minds with little technical or practical knowledge of agriculture. In most cases, very little proof of the original sale agreement or details of the transaction are available.

"Both buyers and sellers should get scale weights, take samples and keep track of the loads," says Lorne Erickson, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Rimbey. "Silage agreements are particularly troublesome because silage is variable, difficult to measure and tends to shrink. When negotiating a silage sale or purchase be sure to specify a moisture content along with the price. There is no point in buying or selling water. A 10 per cent change in moisture content results in a dry matter price change of over 20 per cent."

Take samples as the pit is being filled to determine moisture content and weigh a few loads so that total tonnage can be estimated. Specify in the agreement which units of measure are being used, tonnes or tons. Measure and record the dimensions of the pile. If a dispute arises, this information can help in reaching a settlement.

"If silage is bought or sold from the pit, be aware that normal shrinkage from harvest is 10 to 20 per cent," adds Erickson "Shrinkage may be higher if the packing or covering is poor, if the silage is extremely wet or if load out occurs over a long period of time. Very seldom will the harvest estimate match the amount hauled out, making a compromise necessary."

No amount of detail in the agreement or records will replace honesty and reason, so keep the agreement simple, record the facts and be prepared to compromise. It's a lot better than a day in court.

Contact: Lorne Erickson
(403) 843-2201

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Agri-News Briefs

World Six Horse Hitch championship

The Calgary Exhibition and Stampede is hosting the World Six Horse Hitch Championship on July 6, 7 and 8, 2000. The first ever World Championship features 17 of North America's best six horse hitches competing to live music performed by 40 members of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. "It will be a spectacular sight, seeing the teamsters each guiding six tons of horsepower with only six lines and a voice," says Bruce Roy, past chairman of the Calgary Stampede Heavy Horse Committee. "Belgians, Clydesdales, Percherons and Shires, all beautifully decorated and handsomely appointed, will tramp in cadence, their steel shoes sparkling as they move with the baton of Conductor Edmond Agopian." There have been six horse hitch competitions before, but never a world championship. Spectators can see the six horse hitches at 1:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on July 6 and 7. The media challenge is featured July 8 at 3:00 p.m. and the World Champion Six Horse Hitch Finals are at 4:00 p.m.

Herbs 2000

The International Herb Conference and Herbfest 2000 are being held this summer in Saskatchewan. Hosted by the Saskatchewan Herb and Spice Association (SHSA) and the University of Saskatchewan Extension Division, the conference will be held in Saskatoon on July 18 to 21, 2000. Herbfest begins immediately after the conference and will be held in Outlook, on July 22 and 23, 2000. These two events are co-sponsored by the International Herb Association (IHA) and the Canadian Herb Society (CHS). The conference is an international celebration of the herb and spice industry. It will profile every facet of the industry, from field, to research, to market. The event features speakers from all over the world, all with an interest in the field of herbs and spices. Herbfest 2000 is two days of entertainment and education with vendors showcasing and selling their wares. The event also features speakers, demonstrations and crop tours. Registration for the full conference is $250 for members of IHA, CHS or SHSA and $310 for non-members. Herbfest is $5 per person per day, payable at the gate. For further information, contact one of the host organizations: SHSA (306) 727-2226, Sintaluta, SK, e-mail <**g.musings@sk.sympatico.ca**>;
CHS (604) 224-9457, Vancouver, BC; IHA (540)368-0590, Fredericksburg, VA, e-mail <**members@iherb.org**>; or the U of S (306) 966-5586, Saskatoon, SK, e-mail <**grant.wood@usask.ca**>.

How to make the most of nutrient resources on the farm

Find out from other producers how they reduced fertilizer costs by maximizing the nutrients in manure. ***Manure Management 2000*** conference is planned with the producer in mind. It will take a look at issues and provide participants with hands-on solutions to the everyday and technical issues surrounding the livestock industry. Topics being discussed are: how to use nutrients effectively and save money on purchased fertilizers; the importance of soil and manure testing and how to balance crop nutrient needs with manure and fertilizers application; nutrient carry-over and how it can affect future fertilizer bills and future economic savings; and, why phosphorus is important and what can be done to ensure phosphorus is being managed efficiently. There's something for everyone at ***Manure Management 2000***. For the grain producers looking for ways to reduce fertilizer input costs, they will hear how other producers are using manure from neighboring livestock operations as a nutrient source and to enhance soil quality on their land. ***Hands On Solutions – Manure Management 2000 Conference*** will be held in Calgary on June 26 to 28, 2000 at the Coast Plaza Hotel. The conference will feature a new video produced by Alberta Agriculture's multi media branch, ***Manure and Riparian Management in the 21st Century***. To register, visit the conference webpage at: <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/manure2000**> or contact the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Strathmore office at (403)934-3355. For further information, contact Darcy Fitzgerald **(403) 340-4822. Government numbers are toll free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000.**

Agri-News

June 26, 2000

Reducing tillage with no-till pastures

"Re-seeding pastureland never seemed so easy," says Warren Garnier, rancher and a director with the Wolf Lake Grazing Reserve near Bonnyville, Alberta. "The test strip we did last fall is up and growing great. We wanted to seed it all in the fall but couldn't line up a machine. We still had excellent soil moisture conditions for seeding this spring, so we got it done, and now with some decent rain it looks like we're set for success."

"The key to that success appears to be moisture conservation," says Ron Heller, extension agronomist for the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), Vermilion. "By eliminating the traditional tillage break required to take out the old stand and do seedbed preparation for a new one, the Grazing Reserve folks capitalized on the most important nutrient for plant growth...H_2O."

The main advantage of less tillage is improved soil moisture. Tillage disturbs the surface soil structure in a field, losing moisture to evaporation and runoff. Reducing tillage allows the seeding zone to remain firm yet moist due to better infiltration and the higher residue cover associated with no-till. This advantage is optimized when pasture lands are sprayed with a herbicide to remove the existing stand, then re-seeded with low disturbance equipment.

The grazing association wanted to try something different because their pastures were declining and it was costing a lot of money to break and seed new ones, mainly because of rock. The past few years have been very dry and grazing was poor. In late summer, about 250 acres of selected paddocks were taken out of production with Roundup herbicide @ 1.5L / acre (about a $20.00/acre cost, including custom application). The plan was to re-seed later that fall before freeze-up.

"The challenge was finding the right equipment to handle the rock problem," says Garnier. "We didn't want to disk and pick rocks. Broadcasting the seed and harrowing didn't seem a wise option. Good forage seed is expensive and we knew it would grow if we could just get it in the ground and covered."

Warren phoned Heller about their search for a low disturbance grass seeder. He was able to respond by offering to tryout the Flexi-coil 8000 air seeder through ARTI. "ARTI's mission is to

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reduce the amount and intensity of tillage, and perennial forage crops like pastures provide a link to reaching our goals. Low disturbance seeding into sod is one method of approaching it," adds Heller.

Flexi-coil, a leading manufacturer of direct seeding equipment and partner of ARTI, is making their machines available for promotion of reduced tillage practice. The company has an opener design that works well in most sod conditions. The technology is referred to as angle disc which offers ultra low disturbance and good penetration over other disc, knife, or hoe/shank openers. The Flexi-coil machine used by Garnier's group has on-row packing and double shoot capability.

"In the trial last fall, we tried another no-till drill, but even with the mounted coulter-bar to open a furrow through the sod, placement of seed was not acceptable," says Garnier. "You can really see that now this spring. Where we seeded the test strips with ARTI, the grass catch is what we were hoping for."

Commenting on the trial, Heller explains, "The Flexi-coil 8000 is a compact model that allows easy moving around and setup for producers to tryout some of their no-till ideas. I like the idea of being able to place small forage seed accurately, just where it needs to be to take advantage of the early spring moisture. Add to that the opportunity to precision-place a good fertility package at the same time, and I think the system is sound. The important activity is removing the old grass ahead of time with a non-selective herbicide like Roundup. This will conserve significantly more soil moisture for better forage establishment than a tillage-based undertaking."

Fall-removal before seeding the next spring is about the best method. "Dormant seeding before freeze up can work, perhaps for grass species more than the legumes such as alfalfa," says Heller. "Soil quality and fertility will count, but soil moisture is the big factor. With timely rains, you might be able to get lucky and do it all in one season, but that would not be the normal expectation in Alberta. There seems to be an advantage in having the old sod rot for a time before re-seeding, so spraying a herbicide the year ahead of seeding makes sense. Also, regrowth intervals from haying or grazing will be different for each forage species and year to year, which affects the application timing for herbicide removal, so caution and experience are necessary." Heller suggests trying a small parcel of pasture before attempting the larger fields.

"We made a big commitment to trying this when we decided to spray out the pasture last year," admits Garnier. "It was difficult to find a custom operator willing to take on the project, mostly because of the rocks. Trying out the ARTI machine gave us a chance to see what might work best. Now that it is seeded, we're really pleased. Our cost savings are about $50 per acre."

For farmers and ranchers looking at better ways to manage their forage and pasture land, when it comes to re-seeding, perhaps trying a bit of no-till seeding would be worthwhile. As a reduced tillage agronomist, Heller is ready to discuss the options with producers and put them in touch with others who are trying it. More information on this project and the benefits of reducing tillage in forage establishment is available by contacting Heller at his office in Vermilion.

Contact: *Ron Heller*
(780) 853-8262
<ron.heller@agric.gov.ab.ca>

Market methods: know the options

The target customer has been identified and you have a great agri-product all ready. Now you need to sell it! Here are some of the ways to connect your product with your target customer.

When selling a product or service directly to the customer, you are direct marketing. Direct sales are growing due to increased interest in food safety, the environment and alternative agriculture. There are four common types of direct markets: roadside markets, u-pick, CSA and Farmers' Markets.

Roadside stands sell farm-grown produce at the farm-site on a seasonal basis. A roadside farm market is a larger, permanent version that operates year-round.
Roadside markets may not be located on the farm-site since they must be located near the greatest traffic.

U-pick (pick your own or customer harvest), have the customer come to the farm, harvest their own produce, pay cash for the produce and transport it home.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a term used when consumers buy a share in the agri-venture in advance. The grower commits to supply a range of products over the entire season.

Farmers' Markets unite producers and consumers who wish to buy or sell produce, processed food products, baked goods, crafts etc.

If you decide to expand beyond direct marketing and have someone else take the sales responsibility, then there are other market options available, such as wholesalers, food brokers and retail or food service businesses.

Wholesalers pay for the agri-products and own the goods. They earn income by reselling the agri-product in mixed lots or smaller quantities to retailers or institutions.

Food Brokers sell and market products. A broker could represent your agri-products to a range of businesses from specialty stores and retail grocery chains to wholesalers and food service operators. Some food brokers also offer services like merchandising (planned promotions, and keeping the product on the shelf) computerized ordering and data collection services. Fees (commissions) for brokers range from three to ten per cent.

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Some **retail businesses** may wish to buy products directly. Look for retail operations that specialize in unique, locally made products. Use several types of retailers to diversify your product portfolio and to expand sales.

You may also be able to sell to **food service buyers**. Some large institutions choose to support local suppliers and will buy direct from the producer or processor. Others are looking for a specific product that meets their requirements for quality and service. Examples of food service businesses include colleges, hospitals, hotels and nursing homes.

Research other ways to market your agri-product to customers. E-commerce, contract growing, marketing cooperatives are other market methods that are developing in this fast paced economy.

This is the eighth article in ***Market Driven Agriculture ...Strategies for Success***, a series on how to develop a market focus in your business. The articles are presented by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in partnership with Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association, and will appear in Agri-News weekly for the next two months. For more business and market development information check the Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association websites at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/diversify>** and **<www.awei.ab.ca>**.

Contact: *Donna Fleury*
Rural Development Specialist-Business
Alberta Agriculture, Airdrie District Office
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Weevil outbreak predicted

Based on counts at the Lethbridge Canola Council Site, Canola (Cabbage) Seedpod Weevils are up 320 times what they were two years ago. The weevils are rapidly spreading east and north in Alberta. The numbers will likely reach outbreak levels even as far north as Brooks.

"Early monitoring is finding adult seedpod weevils collecting on flixweed and volunteer canola plants that are starting to bloom," says Gordon Frank, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Brooks. "The numbers are higher in the southern area, so far. One count near Brooks on volunteer canola found over 40 per plant. The cabbage seedpod weevil is exceeding our first fears of high numbers. It appears that most canola fields in the country will require at least one insecticide application to minimize damage."

The threshold levels and time of spraying recommendations have been changed for 2000. The threshold is three to four weevils per 180 degree sweep. Weevils should be monitored with a sweep net starting at the rosette stage through to the end of the season. Early spraying, around the time that the majority of the crop has bolted, is considered essential for best control. Spraying at the bud to early flowering stage should get the adults before they lay eggs in the pods.

"The logic in waiting for the very early flower stage is that the weevils will migrate up the stem, flowers will be starting to open and the weevils will be more vulnerable to insecticide," adds Frank. "This timing will also prevent any egg laying in the early pods. New weevils will be attracted to the yellow color in the field. The full bloom stage is considered too late. But, it is important to continue monitoring because more weevils may exit the buds or migrate into the field after spraying."

The weevils are charcoal grey and have a long black snout. They are unique compared to other insects found in canola and should be easy to recognize. A factsheet further describing this insect, including pictures, can be accessed on the Alberta Agriculture website at **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/pests/insects/csw.html>**.

"The adults lay eggs in even the smallest pods," says Frank. "The larvae eat about two seeds each at the first two instar stages. They can then consume four seeds at the third instar stage. They eventually pupate and fall to the ground. Another adult then emerges and does more damage. It feeds on seeds through the pod wall and eats out the oil and protein to build up strength for winter."

The canola cabbage seedpod weevil has no known natural enemies in Alberta. That explains the explosion in population. An emergency registration of Decis has been approved.

Lorsban may also receive registration but it is much harder on pollinators. Matador is not likely to get seedpod weevil on the label this year. As with all insect spraying, please contact any beekeepers in the area before spraying. Late evening spraying is preferred.

"The long-term hope for control is parasitic insects and plant breeding," adds Frank. "The new canola quality mustard due out in one or two years should be resistant. There is also work in Europe screening for a parasitic wasp. We may be able to import it to Canada in one or two years, as well."

Contact: *Gordon Frank*
(403) 362-1212

Lloyd Dosdall
(780) 422-4911

Jim Jones
(780) 422-0879

Alberta 4-H members heading east this summer

4-H delegates will experience the diversity of Canada through the Interprovincial Exchange program.

When Kyli Boutin, a 19-year-old member of the Echo Hill 4-H Multi-club, found out she had been selected to take part in the 4-H Interprovincial Exchange to eastern Canada, she was so surprised that she didn't hear which province she would be visiting. "I didn't really expect to get this. When my name was announced, I didn't even pay attention to where I was going. When I got back to my table, I had to ask my friends which trip I was going on."

The Interprovincial Exchange program gives 4-H members from across Canada the chance to see how people in other parts of the country live and to find out about the variety of agricultural methods and products in Canada. Sponsored by the Royal Bank, delegates spend two weeks with host families and take part in various activities while on the exchange, which lasts from July 4 to 18.

Boutin, who lives near Pickarville, will visit Newfoundland. Andrea Dawson of Sundre, a member of the Eagle 4-H Beef Club, will visit Manitoba; Tony Jeglum of Clive, who is part of the Clive 4-H Multi-club, will go to New Brunswick; and Sandy Szybunka of Sangudo, a member of the Cherhill 4-H Multi-club, will visit Quebec.

Birkley Wisniewski, who lives near Hairy Hill and is a member of the Willingdon 4-H Multi-club, was also chosen for the Interprovincial Exchange, and will travel to Nova Scotia next month. Having never been east of Manitoba, Wisniewski says he expects to come back with a greater appreciation for how people on the east coast live. "I want to see the whole different way of life, and maybe come back with some new ideas and explain to my Club how people live in Nova Scotia. Out here, we really don't know how they live."

He added that the Interprovincial Exchange is always popular among 4-H delegates, because it gives them a first-hand look at Canada's diversity. "It's a two-week trip, so you can really experience it."

Delegates for the exchange are chosen each year at the Selection program held at Olds College. This year, 134 members of the Alberta 4-H program took part in Selections, held from April 28 to May 1. About 55 other delegates were chosen to take part in 10 other trips across North America.

For more information on joining 4-H call 422-4H4H, (toll-free through the RITE line at 310-0000) or visit the 4-H website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

Contact: Marguerite Stark
Provincial 4-H programs specialist
(403) 948-8510

Annual ram sale features Charollais rams

The 3rd Annual Western Suffolk Sire Reference Program Sale is scheduled for July 1, 2000 at the Olds Cow Palace. As always, the sale will feature Suffolk ram lambs and yearling rams, whose performance for traits such as growth, muscling and leanness have made them eligible for this restricted sale. But, for the first time, there will be a second breed of rams available for purchase. Members of the Charollais Sheep Breeders' Society will be submitting yearling rams to the sale, from their own recently-established sire reference program.

"Conducting a sire reference program involves using AI to create genetic links between flocks, ultrasound to determine which animals have superior muscling and leanness and EPDs (Expected Progeny Differences) for growth rate, muscle depth and leanness," says Dr. Cathy Gallivan, the geneticist in charge of both programs, Olds. "These EPDs are calculated and combined into a Lean Growth Index that is used to rank all of the animals in all of the member flocks, and to make selection decisions."

To be eligible for the sale, Suffolk and Charollais rams must meet standards which include an above-average Lean Growth Index for their breed. They must also pass a physical cull for teeth, legs and testicles, blood tests for Brucella ovis and Ovine Progressive Pneumonia and a veterinary inspection in the sale barn. Flocks submitting rams to the sale must be members of the Alberta Assured Quality Flock Health Program.

Sale day features a full program of events, starting with seminars at 9:00 a.m. Dr. Ileana Wenger will lead off with a popular Ask-the-Vet session, followed by Dr. Denny Crews, Lethbridge Research Station, who will speak on Genetic Improvement of Carcass Traits. The Canadian Cooperative Wool Growers will be on site all day, collecting wool from sheep producers, and selling sheep supplies in their booth in the Trade Fair. There is a free Lamb Lunch at noon, followed by the sale at 1:00 p.m.

"This is the third year of the Western Suffolk Sire Reference Program sale," adds Gallivan. "In 1999, seven buyers purchased two, three or four rams (17 in total). Sale organizers are making it easier for producers to buy more than one ram in 2000, by offering a rebate of 5 per cent to multiple ram buyers - the rebate covers all rams purchased after the first one."

Sheep producers who come to Olds for the sheep sale can stay for the Canada Day celebrations hosted by the Olds Agricultural Society, which include a concert in the grandstand by *Farmer's Daughter*. Tickets for the concert are only $15 and are available from the society at (403) 556-3770.

For more information on the sale, contact Mike Rieberger at 403-224-3743. For more information on the Charollais Sheep Breeders Society, contact Ian Clark at 403-748-2624.

Contact: Dr. Cathy Gallivan (403) 224-3962

Hairdressers and other allies for farm direct sales

It's a hot August day. The strawberries are bursting off their bushes and the customer traffic to your market garden is particularly high. In fact, business was up the last two days. Just what ignited this growth in business?

"Simply put, word-of-mouth," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist-business with Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development, Westlock. "Not your ordinary run of the mill word-of-mouth but strategic, methodical public relations."

Public relations (PR) – basically involves any activity undertaken to promote a positive image, foster goodwill or increase sales. Good public relations can position you and your company as an industry leader and an expert in your field. Confidence and trust can be built and new markets uncovered by a strong public relation campaign.

Hairdressers and other allies – this past winter, a large market gardener from central Alberta said that one of her best public relations activities involved her hairdresser and it happened quite by accident. The gardener made a point of regularly dropping off a basket of fruit for her hairdresser as purely a goodwill activity. The hairdresser loved the produce so much she told everyone who came in for a haircut about it.

Target market – a clearly defined target market will influence everything from what you grow, how you package it, to your hours of operation. Try filling in the blanks on the following statement to develop your target market definition.

My best target customers are ______________________

between the ages of ______ and ______ who work

_______________ and live in ____________________.

They like to _____________________ and believe that

____________________________ is important in their

lives. They have a ___________ of money and spend it on

__________________________________.

"It's important to know where else your target audience goes," says Engel. "Is the market garden's target audience also the hairdresser's target market? What else could the market gardener have done to access the hairdresser's customers? Perhaps some cross promotions like leaving a flyer/coupon for each of the hairdresser's customers or offering to supply a fruit basket for a free draw in the salon would benefit both businesses, particularly if the names collected at the hairdresser are used for further promotions.

PR Ideas – write for your local paper; teach a course or participate on a talk show to be seen as a expert; distribute a farm newsletter; attend trade shows; sponsor events; join the local chamber of commerce; have contests; or institute a frequent buyer program. Stretch the use of gift certificates beyond Mother's Day. Don't forget Father's Day, first day of summer, Canada Day.

"Write down all the nice things people have said about your products/business," adds Engel. "Ask them if you can use them as testimonials. Don't forget your local newspaper and radio stations. Drop off samples for the news makers. It could give you great publicity. Media types love to eat and they're always looking for something to talk or write about."

Don't forget the subtle marketing that happens on the farm and at Alberta Farmers' Markets. Farm uniforms (apron, overalls, t-shirts, hats) create a professional image. Use sandwich boards at the market for extra promotions. Let people know what products will be available next week and, if appropriate, how they can get out to your farm. Many businesses under use their answering machines. Let people know what's available that day, your hours of operation and answer other frequently requested information in your message. Don't forget that you can use your answering machine year round to promote frozen product for sale.

For more information on marketing farm products direct to the consumer call the local rural development specialist – business:

Kerry Engel	Westlock	(780) 349-4465
Lori-Jo Graham	Claresholm	(403) 625-1445
Lisa Houle	Hanna	(403) 854-5500
Sharon Homeniuk	Stony Plain	(780) 963-6101
Tim Keating	Falher	(780) 837-2211
Slav Heller	St. Paul	(780) 645-6301
Donna Fleury	Airdrie	(403) 948-8537
Janice McGregor	Morinville	(780) 939-4351
Leona Reynolds-Zayak	Vermilion	(780) 853-8101
Linda Hawk	Medicine Hat	(403) 529-3616
Lynn Stegman	Lacombe	(403) 782-3301
Jan Warren	Vulcan	(780) 485-2236
Marian Williams	Camrose	(780) 679-1210

Contact: Kerry Engel
(780) 394-4465

Program prepares 4-H'ers for unforgettable summer

After going through all kinds of 4-H summer camps in their younger years, close to 90 senior Alberta 4-H members are about to find out what it's like to be the counselor instead of the camper.

The Leadership Through Counseling Seminar (LTCS), set to run June 29 to July 3, 2000 at the Battle Lake, Alberta 4-H Centre near Westerose, will teach 4-H'ers aged 16 to 21 how to run a successful summer camp. The skills delegates learn at LTCS will help them later in the summer when they will be leaders at various 4-H camps.

"We want to prepare them for the camping experience," says Cara McDuff, one of nine 4-H summer staff members with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Airdrie office who helped organize the program. "LTCS is a training seminar that teaches senior 4-H delegates how to deal with younger campers. We have leadership, teamwork and group work sessions. As well, we introduce them to the games we play at camps, and to skills such as archery and canoeing."

About 2,000 delegates attend 4-H camps every year, and it is important for staff members to ensure that each participant has an unforgettable experience. This is why LTCS, which is sponsored by Peavey Mart, Agricore, Wetaskiwin Co-op and Agrium, is so important. "It puts all the information new staff members need into their heads before they go out. And it's a great way to introduce them to the people they'll be working with," adds McDuff.

Nicol Stone, who is also helping coordinate the camp, says LTCS emphasizes the important role volunteer counselors play at camps. "Our camp counselors are perhaps the most valuable component of our camping programs. Therefore, it is essential to provide them with the necessary training. We incorporate fun and learning into this program in order to shape our counselors into top quality volunteers. Without these enthusiastic youth volunteering their time each summer, our programs simply would not be possible," she says.

Because maintaining the safety of all campers is the first concern of all staff members, the Canadian Red Cross runs a three-hour emergency first aid session for LTCS delegates. This helps prepare them for their responsibilities at 4-H regional and provincial camps this summer. The camps will be held at Camp Mack near Westlock; Battle Lake west of Wetaskiwin; Moose Lake in the Bonnyville area; Camp Artiban near Peace River; and, Elkwater Camp near Medicine Hat. In addition, volunteer counselors will use their skills from LTCS at 4-H provincial programs, such as Club Week, held at Olds College and the People Developing People camps, held at Battle Lake. 4-H programs, open to anyone aged nine to 20, begin in early July and continue almost non-stop until the last week of August.

For more information on joining 4-H call 422-4H4H (government numbers are toll-free through the RITE line by dialing 310-0000 first), or visit the 4-H website at: **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

Contact:	*Cara McDuff*	*Nicol Stone*
	(403) 948-8568	*(403) 948-8568*

Agri-News Briefs

New interactive website for bison producers

Agri-Web Services, a division of CRCS, Inc. announces the launch of a new, exciting, interactive site for bison producers! Bisoncentre.com, a joint project of the Bison Centre of Excellence, Alberta Bison Association, Peace Country Bison Association and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, connects bison ranchers more frequently and more meaningfully, whether they're around the corner or around the world. Membership in **bisoncentre.com** is free and includes everything you need to manage your bison business more cost effectively and more profitably all with the click of a computer mouse!

The website address for this new site is <**http://www.bisoncentre.com**>.

International bison conference

Three days of seminars are planned for the International Bison Conference, August 1 to 4, 2000 in Edmonton. The seminars follow three tracks: a producer segment, a marketing segment and a segment for public herds, science and First Nations. The conference also features a bison trade fair with 150 booths. Registrations can be completed on-line by visiting the conference website <**http://www.hudson.cihost.com/bison2000/**>. Registrations can also be submitted by fax (780) 980-7597 or by mail:

Bison 2000
c/o Bison Centre of Excellence
Leduc County Building, 4301-50 Street
Leduc, Alberta, Canada T9E 7H3

For further information, contact Doug Bienert, marketing manager, Bison Centre of Excellence, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (780) 980-7596, Leduc.

New address for AFC

Agriculture and Food Council has changed office space. Their new address is #402, 1101 - 5 Street, Nisku, AB T9E 7N3. The office phone number is (780) 955-3714 and the fax number is (780) 955-3744.

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Agri-News

July 3, 2000

Protecting your well from contamination

Ground water contamination: how does it happen and what can you do about it? Often the biggest contamination threats on a farm are things that you walk past or trip over every day without even giving them a second thought.

"Ground water quality is normally protected by natural processes," says Ken Williamson, agricultural water specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Red Deer. "The topsoil and subsoil filter out many contaminants as the water on the ground surface soaks into the ground to recharge the groundwater. Any time this process is short-circuited you have an increased potential for contamination."

Common routes to the contamination of ground water:

Poor well construction

- The fastest way to contaminate ground water is to drill a poor quality well.
- A poor surface casing or formation seal can allow surface water to seep along the outside of the casing and into the producing zone of the well.
- Multi-aquifer well completion allows mixing of water from different aquifers.
- The best protection here is to hire a qualified, conscientious driller.

Old abandoned water wells

- Old wells with poor construction or rusted-out casing can contaminate good wells. Old wells need to be properly decommissioned by plugging from bottom to top with bentonite or cement grout. This is usually best done by licenced water well driller.

Pump pits

- Can provide a funnel for contaminated surface water or shallow ground water to enter a well and contaminate ground water in the area.
- Spring is a particularly bad time for flooding well pits to allow contaminated surface water to get into a well. Well *pits* should be replaced with pitless adaptors, or at least have a sanitary well seal installed. Well pits were outlawed in the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (1993), but many old pits still exist.

Farm water hydrants installed in a well or well pit

- These can cause back-siphonage that can draw contaminated water down the well.
- Remove the hydrant from these locations or install anti-siphon valves that will reduce the risk of back-siphoning.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Poor sewage systems

- Leaking septic tanks or cesspools can contaminate shallow wells with nutrients and bacteria.

Seismic shot holes

- Poorly plugged shot holes can be a direct conduit for surface water into the ground water. Old shot holes were often very poorly plugged. In Alberta, new regulations , since 1998, require that shot holes be plugged to a depth of at least 1 meter, with at least 40 cm of approved material (eg. Bentonite) on top of the plug. Above the bentonite at least 60 cm of drill cuttings must be tamped in. Land owners can negotiate for more complete plugging to be done.

Over application of manure

- Manure that is applied to land at a greater rate than will be used by growing crops can result in leaching of nitrogen into ground water.

An excellent reference book, ***Water Wells that Last for Generations***, is available through Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development, Alberta Environment, and Agriculture Canada (PFRA) Offices. This free publication covers subjects ranging from "what is ground water?" to well maintenance.

Alberta Agriculture's also has ***Water Wells that Last for Generations*** in video format. Videos are available on loan or for purchase from Alberta Agriculture district offices and from the multi media branch, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Another source of information on the subject is Alberta Agriculture's website. The address is **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca./sustain/water/wq7.html>**.

Contact: Ken Williamson
(403) 340-5324

New provincial horse specialist

Dr. Lori Warren, who recently received her PhD in equine nutrition and exercise physiology from the University of Kentucky and has a Master of Science degree from that same institution, started at her new position as provincial horse specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton, on May 19, 2000.

"One of my main focuses working at Alberta Agriculture will be the transfer of new knowledge to members of the horse industry," says Warren. "I believe it's important to keep those working within the industry abreast of new information and advances in science, and help them put this new knowledge into practice. It is also essential to attract and educate new people interested in horses to keep Alberta's horse industry expanding and growing."

Warren will also be focusing her attention on research. As a nutritionist, she will be looking at optimizing forage use within horse diets, with particular emphasis on forage utilization and fibre digestion by young, growing horses. "Nutritional research with horses is lagging behind research on other livestock species. There is a lot of basic information on nutrition and feed use that we need to learn about to improve horse feeding practices," she adds.

Nutrition of performance horses, how exercise affects the nutrient requirements of horses and how nutrition can be utilized to help horses performs to their genetic capacity are also areas of research that she will be working on.

"Horses are incredible athletes and their nutrient requirements may be altered by the activities they participate in, especially young horses entering training while they are still growing," says Warren. "Beyond nutrition, there are also management concerns that have yet to be addressed by adequate research. Examples include composting manure at stables and training facilities to reduce landfill waste, improving the marketing of horses and developing a universal horse identification system. Above all, research needs to benefit the horse, that's really what I'm here for."

"Warren has conducted and collaborated on many research projects involving equine nutrition, exercise physiology, management and biomechanics (gait analysis)," says Doug Milligan, head of Alberta Agriculture's pork, poultry and horse branch, Edmonton. "Her PhD work involved optimizing the dietary fibre content of horses competing in prolonged activities, such as endurance racing and the speed and endurance phase of a three-day event. She has experience and received several awards for presenting research material at scientific meetings and is an accomplished classroom lecturer. We are very pleased that she accepted the position as provincial horse specialist here in Alberta."

Warren grew up in southeast Wyoming on a large sheep and cattle ranch where her family also raises working Quarter Horses. Before going on to the U of K, she received her Bachelor of Science degree in animal science from the University of Wyoming. She has a well-rounded view of the horse industry, receiving a strong western influence in Wyoming, participating in 4-H, competing in barrel racing, team-roping, other rodeo events and showing on the American Quarter Horse Association circuit and then gaining experience with the Thoroughbred and Standardbred breeding and racing industries in Kentucky. She also has experience with other equine performance events, such as jumping, three-day eventing and endurance racing.

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"I am excited to be in Alberta and am looking forward to working with the people and the horses in the province," concludes Warren. "My objective is not only to be of service to the people of the horse industry, but to improve the lives of our horses."

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4-H'ers raise big bucks for good cause

A Parents' Room at the Stollery Children's Health Centre in the University of Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, is one step closer to reality, thanks to the efforts of the Lakedell 4-H Beef club.

The club raised close to $56,000 for the project from the sale of a single calf, which was purchased and donated back for sale an amazing eight times, at the Beef club's annual auction on April 15. Donations on the day of the sale increased funding for the project to $57,650, and since then, subsequent donations have pushed the final amount to $62,494.

Lakedell 4-H Beef club member Peter Van Immerzeel, who raised the big-money bovine, said his club donates the proceeds from the sale of its club calf each year to a worthy cause. While his club raised a respectable $3,000 for the STARS air rescue service both last year and the year before, he said the $56,000 raised at the club's auction this year surprised everybody. "It was quite amazing. I was in the ring for about an hour with the calf during the auction, so I was pretty tired by the end."

The club's 26 members took on this project after Gerald and Colleen Zimmerman approached them in September of last year. The couple's middle child, Adam, then only four years old, underwent a 12 hour operation to remove a brain tumor in December of 1998. While their son was in surgery, Gerald and Colleen waited in the cafeteria and lounge of the U of A Hospital. This experience convinced them of the need to find a private place in the hospital for families to wait while their children are in surgery.

Van Immerzeel said the members of his club were glad to help out, since Gerald Zimmerman, who is an auctioneer himself, regularly volunteers for the Lakedell Beef club's annual calf sale, and his wife helps 4-H'ers by judging public speaking contests. Although the Zimmermans aren't 4-H leaders and their three children are still too young to join the program, there is a good rapport between them. "The club has been great, and really supportive of this project," said Colleen.

On the day of the sale, the Friends of Adam, a group dedicated to helping the family and to making the Parents' Room a reality, had $14,000 to bid on the calf. But to their surprise, a representative of Farmer Automatic Canada, after hearing Gerald explain where the proceeds from the club calf were going, paid $15,500 for the animal. "He didn't know a thing about it till five minutes before the auction," said Colleen "We never expected to be out bid at $14,000."

The surprises didn't end there, however. After Farmer Automatic and then the Friends of Adam had both purchased the calf and donated it for re-sale, six more bidders came forward to support the project. Cummins Diesel paid $7,200 for the calf, followed by Wetaskiwin's Garden Market IGA with $5,000. Next was Wetaskiwin Value Drug Mart with a bid of $5,250, and then Parkland Fertilizer with $4,000. Central Oilfield Construction was next in line with a $3,000 bid and finally Vold, Jones and Vold Auction Company paid $2,000 for the calf. Vold, Jones and Vold later re-sold the calf in Ponoka for $1,300, which also helped boost funding for the Parents' Room project.

"We were quite astonished at how much was raised," said Van Immerzeel, who raised the special calf on behalf of his club, in addition to raising a regular project animal. "It was a good group feeling, knowing we had helped."

The Zimmermans were surprised not only at how much the calf raised, but also at the number of people who were eager to help out with donations. "We had 20 cheques in our pockets when we came home," she said. "We never thought we could raise this much. We hoped we could pull in about $20,000."

Members of the Lakedell 4-H Beef Club presented a final cheque of $62,494.23 to the family during the Children's Miracle Network telethon on June 4. The Parents' Room should be open in late summer, said Colleen. It will have not only furniture and a television, but will also have Internet access so parents can keep in touch with their businesses and family, and pagers so they can be contacted by the hospital when they leave for meals or just to take a break. When it's finished, the room, which is being organized by the Children's Help Foundation and the U of A Hospital's Child Health Program, which the Zimmermans are advisors to, will serve families from across Alberta, as well as parts of BC and Saskatchewan. "It's not just an Edmonton thing. Over 50 per cent of the kids up there are not from the Edmonton area," said Colleen.

Although the room wasn't available for the Zimmermans while they waited for news about Adam, Colleen said it will be there in the future for families undergoing the stress that her family went through. "If you can give the family something positive, someplace nice for them to go, then it's one step toward recovery for the whole family," she said.

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E-commerce markets

The Internet is changing our lives. Not only is it being used to access information and to share ideas, but people and businesses now use the internet to research and purchase goods and services. E-commerce offers a new market to sell your agri-products or services to local or distant markets, no matter what size your business is.

Your agri-business can join the e-commerce market by setting up a website and selling products or services to customers over the Internet. The customers who you deal with could be consumers, businesses or both. When you deal with consumers this is called business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce. A business that sells agri-products to other businesses would be using a business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce model. When consumers sell to consumers you get the third type of e-commerce, consumer-to-consumer (C2C). On-line auctions are the most common C2C type of e-commerce.

Business analysts project rapid growth for all forms of e-commerce (B2B, B2C, and C2C) over the next few years. From the buyer perspective the Internet offers greater price comparison without the hassles or extra time spent visiting several retail operations. The e-commerce market attracts new, unique businesses with niche products and services. Variety and constantly changing products and services also appeal to Internet shoppers.

Even if your agri-business uses another market(s) to sell your products or services you may still want to access e-commerce. You could use websites on the Internet to purchase your agri-business inputs and supplies. In fact, business to business type of e-commerce is the fastest growing segment in the marketplace.

A big unknown in many agri-business start-ups is how they will market products or services to the chosen target customer group. With e-commerce you can inform customers all over the globe about your products or services. You may want to budget extra money in your business plan to market your agri-products and website to target customers.

E-commerce businesses can save money on the costs of renting or building a shop. In the new "e" jargon, retail businesses with a physical space are called bricks and mortar (BAM). Cost savings for an e-commerce agri-business (with no physical retail space) could extend to decorating, maintenance and staffing. On the other hand, you will need to spend some money to set up your website. There will also be ongoing website maintenance costs to ensure the site is reliable.

An e-commerce market allows you to eliminate middlemen like wholesalers, distributors and brokers from your business plan. But you will need to spend more time on tasks like order taking, order delivery, billing systems and customer service, unless you decide to hire a service company to handle these tasks.

Is e-commerce a good fit for your current or new agri-business?

This is the ninth article in ***Market Driven Agriculture ...Strategies for Success***, a series on how to develop a market focus in your business. The articles are presented by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in partnership with Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association. For more business and market development information check the Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association websites at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/diversify**> and <**www.awei.ab.ca**>.

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Pesticide application service registration

"Alberta Environment has established guidelines and regulations governing pesticide application," says Janet McLean, pesticide program manager with Alberta Environment, Edmonton. "The Service Registration Requirements are in place to ensure spraying is done safely and effectively."

Many producers are now contracting-out pesticide application services. It is very important for producers to ensure that any operation contracted to spray has a valid Pesticide Service Registration issued by Alberta Environment.

"Service Registrations ensure that the custom operation is supervised by a qualified pesticide applicator, carries insurance and is aware of provincial pesticide regulatory requirements," adds McLean. "Each year, there are a number of custom sprayers, including producers, who provide pesticide application services for hire or reward in contravention of Service Registration Requirements."

Fines of several thousand dollars can be imposed for pesticide regulation violations. Lawsuits brought on by landowners to cover damages from improper spraying can result in even greater financial penalties.

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To find out whether the Service being considered is registered, contact the nearest Alberta Environment Regional office:

Grande Prairie	(780) 538-5460
Stony Plain	(780) 963-6131
Edmonton	(780) 427-7617
Red Deer	(403) 340-5310
Calgary	(403) 297-8262
Lethbridge	(403) 381-5511

To find out what is required to operate a pesticide application service, contact Alberta Environment's toll free Pesticide Certification line: 1-800-661-3495.

Contact: Janet McLean
(780) 427-9888
Fax: (780) 422-5120

Montana trip just right for Alberta 4-H members

The Selections program gives Alberta youths a chance to experience 4-H congress in the Big Sky state. For Dustin Cowan of Compeer, being chosen for a trip to the 4-H Congress in Bozeman, Montana was the best news he could have received from the Selections program last month.

"That was my number one choice. I've been to Montana before, but just to the mountains, so I'd like to see more of it," says 17-year-old Cowan, a member of the Altario 4-H Beef club.

Sponsored by the Weston Garfield Foundation and Alberta 4-H Programs Trust, the Montana Congress trip was one of 11 excursions awarded to about 60 4-H'ers through the Selections program, held April 28 to May 1, 2000 at Olds College. Like all the journeys, the Montana trip is a chance for 4-H'ers to learn how people live in other areas and how they approach agriculture and their 4-H programs.

Adele Prefontaine, a 17-year-old member of the Bon Accord 4-H Beef club from Legal, got her first look at the differences between Canadian and American 4-H programs when she went to the Western National Stock Show in January. While there, she met some American 4-H'ers who plant acres of pumpkins and soy each year, but who had never heard of canola. She expects the Montana trip will be equally intriguing. "I was amazed at the differences between Canada and the United States," she says.

She was also amazed that some American clubs were so competitive they skipped the social functions so they could spend more time preparing for the stock show's written and oral tests. "In Montana, there's a youth conference where they'll have a public speaking demonstration, and the clothing kids will put on a fashion show. It will be interesting to see how competitive they are," she adds.

Jay Holt of Lloydminster, a member of the Rivercourse 4-H Multi-club, and Jennifer Kupsch of Barrhead, a member of the Camp Creek 4-H Multi-club, will also take part in the Montana Congress. The trip, which lasts from July 8 to 15, includes stops at West Glacier for whitewater rafting, Deer Lodge for visits to local museums and a visit to Great Falls, among other experiences.

Chaperones Nicol Stone of Wetaskiwin and Fred Hanson from Balzac expect a lively time throughout the trip. "The four delegates participating in this award trip are terrific individuals, full of energy and enthusiasm. I'm sure they will make the trip a fantastic one. The Montana State 4-H Congress looks as though it will a busy and exciting week. I'm really looking forward to it," says Stone.

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll-free through the RITE line at 310-0000) or visit our website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

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Throw another turkey on the barbie

Summer is a great time for the continuing saga of ***Turkey Tuesdays***. The Alberta Turkey Producers (ATP) have prepared some terrific turkey meal selections for the barbecue. Recipe ideas and copies of the ATP's *Barbecue with Alberta Turkey* recipe brochure are available by contacting Alberta Turkey Producers, #212, 8711A - 50 Street, Edmonton, AB T6B 1E7. Turkey can be a great choice for the grill. For more information, contact Janice Shields, promotion coordinator with ATP at (780) 465-5755 or e-mail **<info@abturkey.ab.ca>**.

Organic crops tour

This year's organic crop tour is being held on July 7, 2000 at 1:00 pm at Little Red Hen Mills, New Norway. The day consists of crop tours of wheat, rye, peas and oats, peas and barley, plowdown blends, and baby potatoes. Participants will get a chance to look at the equipment being used and producers will be on hand to answer production questions. Little Red Hen Mills is located five miles north and one mile east of Edberg, or six miles east of New Norway, then one mile south, and two miles east. Registration for the tour is $10 per person and $15 per couple. Pre-registration is required and can be completed by calling 780-855-2164 or 780-855-2286, or mailing Little Red Hen Mills, RR #2, New Norway, AB TOB 3LO. Registration can also be done by email **<lrhm@telusplanet.net>**.

New potato agronomist appointed at CDC South

Dr. Michele Konschuh is the new potato agronomist at Alberta Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South (CDCS) in Brooks. Since June 1, she has been leading a research program that has operated at the Centre for over 30 years. Konschuh grew up on a farm near Calgary. She completed her B.Sc. degree at the University of Calgary in 1989, majoring in botany, and was granted a Ph.D. in plant physiology in 1995. Following graduation, she held post-doctoral positions at the University of Calgary and University of Alberta from 1996-98. Later, she was vice-president of research and development at Grow West Plant Regeneration Inc. and served as a part-time instructor at Medicine Hat College and as a research associate at CDCS. Konschuh's academic training and her experience working with various sectors of the agricultural industry will help her handle the varied research and extension responsibilities of her new position. As leader of the CDCS potato research agronomy program, she will direct studies in areas such as nutrient management, tuber initiation and set, seed physiology, plant establishment, and seed piece management asthey affect plant growth, tuber yield and quality. Information generated from this work will be distributed to potato producers, processors and industry representatives across Alberta. Konschuh's appointment is welcome news to Alberta's rapidly expanding potato industry. She is a valuable addition to Alberta Agriculture's potato team. For further information, contact Konschuh at (403) 362-1314.

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July 10, 2000

Be a good neighbour when spraying

During widespread insect outbreaks, government agencies receive numerous calls from people concerned about insecticide spraying around their farms and residences. "In previous years, Albertans were more accepting of the producers' requirement to spray once they knew what was happening and why," says Janet McLean, of Alberta Environment's Pesticide Management Program.

Three insecticide products are routinely used for Agricultural spraying in Alberta: chlorpyrifos (Lorsban, Pyrinex); deltamethrin (Decis); and cyhalothrin lambda (Matador). These products have been reviewed and registered by Health Canada for agricultural use.

Although producers have the legal right to apply pesticides on their property, Alberta Environment recommends that producers contact neighbours immediately adjacent to fields scheduled for spraying. This should be done to identify potential hazards that need to be considered before spraying.

"Notification is simply a good neighbour policy that helps eliminate risks," says McLean. "Although Alberta Environment recommends notification by producers, people with special concerns such as bee hives, livestock, or medical conditions should also consider taking a proactive approach and call their neighbours to ensure their concerns are known."

Most insecticides give off some odour that may be noticed for several hours after spraying, and from a considerable distance beyond sprayed areas. These odours do not represent a health hazard. Anyone who lives near canola fields can minimize exposure to insecticides, or insecticide odours, by closing windows and doors during an application or by leaving the area until spraying is complete and the insecticide has dried, which can take up to six hours. Those who wish to leave their homes during spraying should contact neighbouring canola growers to determine if and when crops will be sprayed.

While it is the responsibility of all aerial applicators to protect bystanders from exposure to insecticide droplets, passers-by should not stop on adjacent roads to watch insecticide applications. Spectators who are near field perimeters, even if they are in parked vehicles, put additional pressures on pilots and create unnecessary hazards to safe spraying. Anyone who is driving along a road where spraying is in progress should roll up windows and close ventilation systems until clear of the spraying area.

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It is illegal to apply pesticides in a manner that could cause an adverse effect. Alberta Environment maintains a 24 hour toll-free phone line for environmental complaints and emergencies: 1-800-222-6514.

Contact: Janet McLean
(780) 427-9888

Horsemanship major – a new program for Fairview College

Fairview College will enhance its Equine programs this fall by adding a Horsemanship major to its existing Training major to complement the Equine Studies program. The Alberta college is one of only five *horse schools* in Canada teaching Horsemanship and Training.

"Equine Studies has had a presence on the Fairview College scene since the mid-1980s," says Dalin Bullock, co-ordinator of Agricultural Technologies, Fairview College. "It is recognized as a leader in equine education, number one in Canada and number four in North America among 67 horse schools, according to a survey documented on the horse schools website <**www.horseschools.com**>."

The College's respected position stems from a combination of excellent facilities and instruction and a balance of theory and practical course work.

The new one-year certificate Horsemanship major will emphasize horsemanship skills and prepare students to excel in horsemanship with the option of obtaining a coaching certificate. In doing so, it will serve the growing educational needs of the equine industry.

"A recent study commissioned by the Canadian Equestrian Federation found that the horse industry in Canada is growing steadily," adds Bullock. "Between 1993 and 1998, the Canadian horse industry grew by 17.8 per cent. The impact of the escalation is an increase in the need for people with skills in training and coaching."

The rise in demand for graduates of the Horsemanship major means employment possibilities will be strong. Alberta Learning's Key Performance Indicator statistics indicate the employment rate for Fairview College Equine Studies students was 100 per cent in 1997-98 and 88 per cent in 1998-1999, comparable to other programs at Fairview College. Employment rates in the industry are expected to remain high.

The Horsemanship major within the Equine Studies program is a unique certificate program in Alberta. Its novel approach incorporates a practical training emphasis with the rapid advancement of students through Canadian Equestrian Federation (CEF) Rider Levels 1 to 4. This rapid advancement bonus means that Fairview College graduates will have the option of training and testing for their CEF Coaching Level 1.

"Students in the Horsemanship major will be eligible for the same awards as students in the Training portion of the Equine Studies program," says Bullock. "These prestigious program-specific awards are generously donated by equine and agriculturally related industries and individuals. Equine Studies students are encouraged to apply for these and the many general awards available to Fairview College students."

Fairview College is a multi-campus northwestern Alberta-based college, that celebrates its 50th birthday in 2001. It began as the Fairview School of Agriculture and Home Economics. Its programs are diverse and run the gamut of Agricultural Technologies, Business and Trade Technologies.

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Selling products and services through the internet

E-commerce is termed a growing market that uses a website on the internet to sell products and services. Some agri-businesses are looking into using e-commerce to sell products and services to new and largely expanded customer bases.

New markets can change the way things operate. E-commerce provides the option of using an intermediary to sell a product to distant markets. In the past, most agri-businesses interested in distant or larger markets required the services of an intermediary like a wholesaler, distributor or broker. E-commerce an agri-business may help the business link directly to global customers through its website.

The logistics activities in an e-commerce business are very important since it's one way to hold onto customers. Logistics is a term that describes all the activities required to fill a customer order through the website. From order taking to delivery, payment and managing returns for agri-products shipped, there are lots of details to think about. Don't forget to check shipping, customs, taxation and other export requirements if shipping outside of Canada.

Of course, there are many ways to handle logistics and more are being created each day. You may decide to outsource tasks, such as order processing and delivery, to a company designed to offer this service, but, should you choose, these logistics activities can be handled by the business. If you decide to handle your own logistics activities allow extra time in the work plan.

With an e-commerce agri-business you may get paid faster than you would from a retail operation. This reduces working capital requirements. Access to working capital, (the money

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needed to pay for or produce products or services before you get paid) can be challenging for new, unproven agri-businesses.

In a retail agri-business, such as a nutraceutical shop, any products purchased from other agri-preneurs must be paid for before you can sell them. This could take months between payment for goods and services and receipt of income from customers. The internet flips the traditional retail payment system upside down.

With an e-commerce nutraceutical shop, you could arrange with an agri-product supplier to ship the product directly to the customer. This means you receive payment from the customer and then pay the supplier. This type of product supplier arrangement can also lower costs for warehousing and inventory maintenance.

E-commerce agri-businesses need to tailor their marketing program to the internet. Currently, most new e-commerce businesses find they need to spend more money on advertising. As the internet grows and the number of businesses offering goods and services over the net multiplies, it will be tougher to catch the attention of net shoppers. To get the most from advertising dollars, consider extra services, unique agri-products, catchy slogans and logos that are directed at the target customer group.

Is e-commerce a good fit for your current or new agri-business? Check out two new books available in many business resource centres:

- **Selling Online – How to become a successful e-commerce merchant in Canada** – *Jim Carroll and Rick Broadhead.*
- **The Unofficial Guide to Starting A Business Online** – *Jason R. Rich.*

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Taking leadership training to the great outdoors

When Cari-Ann Viney of Didsbury arrived at the Summer Youth Leadership Camp near Hinton on July 3, she not only expected to improve her leadership skills, but to have a lot of fun doing it.

"There's canoeing, horseback riding, hiking and other activities. The idea is to have fun and at the same time learn about leadership skills," said the 18-year old member of Didsbury Outlaws 4-H Horse Club.

The program aims to help delegates become stronger leaders and to learn new interpersonal skills by incorporating classroom-based theories into physical activities. A variety of skills come into play, from cross-cultural communications and group dynamics to conflict resolutions and public speaking. Although Viney, who has twice served as vice-president and is currently the president of her club, already has a good deal of leadership experience, she believes this camp augmented her abilities.

"I think it added to the leadership skills I already have. Everybody has different ideas about leadership, and I think I can take some of that from the camp and bring it back to my club."

Michael Fontaine of St. Paul, who was also selected to attend the camp, agrees that it compliments the leadership the skills already taught by the Alberta 4-H program. "4-H has definitely helped me become a better leader. I think it does that for everybody. This camp adds to that," said Fontaine, a member of the St. Paul 4-H Multi-club.

Also attending was Julie Ulseth of Veteran, a member of the Consort Creative Hands 4-H club, and Georgina Lieverse of Beaverlodge, who is part of the Beaverlodge 4-H Beef club. The quartet was chosen to take part in the Summer Youth Leadership Camp after attending the Alberta 4-H Selections program, held April 28 to May 1, 2000 at Olds College.

Each year, about 60 delegates from the Selections program are chosen to attend various educational and skill-building tours and trips, ranging from interprovincial exchanges to participating in 4-H conferences in Montana and California. Trips begin in early July and run well into the next year.

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dailing 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at < **www.agric.ab.gov.ca/4h**>.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
Provincial 4-H Programs Specialist
(403) 948-8510

New programs to bridge the gap for 4-H'ers

4-H'ers will have the chance to take on greater leadership roles while learning about the environment during two new camps set to kick off this summer.

The Six-Day Camp and the Combined Program, both new additions to the list of 4-H summer activities, will also help delegates adjust to the responsibilities of higher-level summer camps and will challenge delegates a little bit more than other 4-H camps they may have attended. Like all 4-H camps, the new additions aim to improve the delegates' knowledge, attributes, skills and attitudes. Each program, starting with junior programs and advancing to senior programs such as Club Week and the Leadership Through Counseling Seminar, is a progression from the one before it which gives delegates greater responsibility and more opportunities to make decisions.

The Six-Day Camp, aimed at delegates aged 12 to 14, is an intermediate camp that prepares delegates for senior-level 4-H camps. "This is something a little bit more challenging than the current intermediate camp program, but not as challenging as the People Developing People or Club Week programs," said Cathy Borthwick, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's 4-H Summer Programs team. "This is a new program, and it's really for people who have attended 4-H camps before."

Scheduled to run July 9-14 at the Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle Lake, the Six-Day Camp gives delegates more opportunities to lead activities than they would find at other intermediate camps. For example, small groups of delegates will be responsible for teaching something new to the larger group as a whole during their stay at the overnight campsite.

The Combined Program, which welcomes delegates aged 10 to 14, runs July 17-21 at both Battle Lake and Peace River. This program prepares 4-H'ers to move from junior to intermediate camps, said Borthwick. "Delegates will still get to make decisions for themselves, but not as often as they would at the Six-Day Camp."

Sponsored by Union Pacific, TransCanada and the Alberta 4-H Programs Trust, these camps have an environmental focus, with awareness sessions, as well as activities such as outdoor survival, lean-to construction, campfire building and clean-up, and tree transplanting. "It's exciting because they're new programs and there's a lot of room for changing things around. They should be a lot of fun," said Borthwick.

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

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4-H Summer Staff

Marguerite Stark (403) 948-8510
Provincial 4-H Programs Specialist

Backyard gardens and late blight disease of potatoes

Alberta is developing a strong reputation as a producer of quality potatoes for seed, processing and fresh use. The potato industry of Alberta is expanding at a rapid pace due to the opening of two new french fry plants in southern Alberta.

"This years' provincial potato acreage will be almost twice what it was in 1998," says Dr. Piara Bains, plant pathologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "The three main potato growing areas of Alberta are Edmonton and surrounding area, Lacombe, and Taber and surrounding area. Production in Edmonton and Lacombe is primarily for seed, whereas the Taber area produces potatoes primarily for processing and fresh use."

This spring was very dry for crops until the rain began falling in central and northern Alberta during the first week of June. The rain brought with it hope for an excellent crop. It also created high moisture conditions that are very conducive for the development of many diseases. One disease that is very devastating under high moisture and warm temperature conditions, is late blight of potatoes caused by the fungus *Phytophthora infestans*.

"Late blight starts from infected seed, infected potato residue, or from air-borne spores which land on and infect leaves, stems, and flower parts," says Bains. "The symptoms of the disease start as small water-soaked spots which enlarge and become brown with light green margins and eventually turn black with a yellow halo. Under conducive conditions, the disease spreads like wild fire and poses a very serious threat to the potato industry. It is therefore very important not to introduce the disease in the potato growing areas of Alberta."

Home and acreage owners can play a significant role in keeping this disease out of Alberta's potato growing areas. One of the best ways of managing late blight is exclusion of the disease. It is very important to plant high quality (certified) seed.

"Alberta is drier than most other potato growing provinces and has only sporadic outbreaks of this disease therefore sourcing seed from Alberta growers minimizes the risk of disease introduction," adds Bains. "It is also important to provide some protection to the plants. Fungicides registered for use on potatoes and available to home gardeners include products containing chlorothalonil, copper oxychloride and tribasic copper sulfate."

Always read the label before using any chemical and follow instructions carefully.

Another precaution that home owners should take is to never compost infected plant material. Many home composters do not reach temperature and oxygen levels to ensure the destruction of the fungus. This means that the organism

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remains viable and could spread very easily with wind. The best disposal methods are to burn or place all infected plant material in a sealed garbage bag.

The same organism also causes late blight of tomatoes. Tomato transplants and tomatoes could be infected with the disease and become a source of inoculum. Similar precautions should be used to avoid the development and spread of the disease on tomatoes.

Contact: Dr. Piara S. Bains *Patricia Duplessis*
(780) 415-2302 *(780) 415-2315*

New York food show just right for Alberta 4-H'er

Jason Boorse, born and raised in rural Alberta, has been looking forward to a trip to New York City where he'll get a first-hand look at how far Canadian agricultural products reach.

Boorse, long time 4-H'er from the St. Paul area, is the Alberta delegate in the 2000 International Trade Awareness Program. Sponsored by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Canadian 4-H Council and Alberta Food Processors Association, the program gives one delegate from each province the chance to learn more about Canadian food products and how they are marketed internationally. Twenty-one year-old Boorse says this is just right for him.

"I'm going to the University of Alberta for a bachelor of commerce degree, so I think this trip will be a great experience. I'll be able to see what international trade is all about, and what other countries are marketing," he says.

While in New York from July 9 to 12, Boorse and the other Canadian 4-H delegates will visit the International Fancy Food and Confection Show, a trade fair that attracts more than 2,000 exhibitors and over 25,000 buyers from all over the world. Boorse says exposure to the marketing of international food products fits right in with his long-term plans. "When I got to the U of A, I decided that after I finished my bachelor of commerce degree, I would go for my agriculture business degree. So this trip, on top of that, is right up my alley."

With a visit to the Canadian Consulate General for a presentation on Canada's role in international trade and a breakfast with federal agriculture minister Lyle Vanclief, Boorse will have plenty of opportunities to supplement his education. Delegates have to give a three to four minute impromptu speech on what they learned during their trip, so they must pay close attention to everything they encounter while in New York. But Boorse says he is also looking forward to making some new contacts. "I'd like to meet some people and find out what's out there. But if there isn't time for that, I'd be happy just to go and have a great time."

As a 4-H'er since 1989 and a current member of the Alumni Association, Boorse says 4-H has given him the opportunity to travel, including a 1998 trip to New Brunswick where he took part in a young forester's camp, and a 1995 exchange to Quebec. But, next month's flight to New York will be the farthest journey he's ever taken and, because of his interests in both agriculture and business, promises to be one of the most memorable. "I like the flexibility and independence of business. It's everywhere. And it fits right in with agriculture, because it covers everything from administering a chemical company to sales. So I'm pretty happy with the opportunities these fields offer," he says.

For more information on joining 4-H call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dailing 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at **<www.agric.ab.gov.ca/4h>**.

Contact: Carol Sullivan
(780) 422-4H4H

Agri-News Briefs

Fruit growers field day in southern Alberta

The Fruit Growers Society of Alberta (FGSA) is sponsoring a field day at the Hamer farm in Dewinton, on July 15, 2000. The day includes a tour of an established southern Alberta Saskatoon orchard, an on-farm processing facility, a large established U-pick operation, an on-farm restaurant, a nursery and greenhouse operation with mail order, buffalo and buffalo products. Paul Hamer will be sharing his knowledge and expertise of this industry. The tour starts at 10:00 a.m. Cost of the field day is adults $10/person. For further information, contact Wilf Litwin at (780) 992-1934 or Nadine Stielow at (780) 998-1313.

Capriculture 2000

Boer goats, meat goats and range management are the focus of the July 15, 2000 Capriculture 2000 seminar and field day. The seminar features: Norman Kohls, NK Ranches, Eldorado, Texas, who will speak on setting breeding program goals, the importance of structure and functional type, breeding to correct faults, and how important is pedigree; Dr. Frank Pinkerton, The Goat Works, Grapeland, Texas, presenting new dynamics in the North American meat goat industry; and, Dr. Scott Clifford, a holistic resource management instructor from Dauphin, Manitoba addressing meat goats and range management, grazing livestock as an environmental service, and herd effect and animal impact as tools in land restoration. The seminar is being held at Keri-Rose Boer Goats, Scandia, Alberta. Registration in advance is requested. Registration fees are $55 per adult full day, $40 per adult half day, $25 per youth (16 years old or under) full day, and $20 per youth half day. For further information or to register, contact Brian or Katie Payne at (403) 793-2506, fax (403) 793-2506, e-mail **<boersinc@eidnet.org>**.

Young beef producers put their skills to the test

About 260 Alberta 4-H'ers will show their beef breeding projects in Bashaw Agricultural Grounds on July 16-18 at the 24th annual Alberta 4-H Beef Heifer Show. Sponsored by Gas Alberta, ABS Canada, Alberta Treasury Branches, Ivomec and UFA, the event will draw 4-H'ers ranging in age from nine to 20 to show an expected 450 head of livestock. "The delegates, will have a lot of hands-on work to do when they arrive," says organizer Charles Schoening, 4-H project event coordinator with the 4-H Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "This is a chance for them to take what they have learned and apply it to situations where they can use it. This includes categories like judging, grooming, showmanship and team problem solving." 4-H members also have a chance to put their knowledge to the test with the Beef Bowl Contest, a question-and-answer competition which quizes teams on their understanding of beef production, basic bovine anatomy and related topics. The heifers themselves, which delegates work with for one to three years, are judged according to breed and age in the conformation classes, along with their calves. This year, UFA will be honoured as a Friend of the Beef Heifer Show for its long-standing support of the vent. "The public is welcome to attend. It's free and there is a lot for everyone to see," said Schoening. For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000 first) or visit the 4-H website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

4-H Dairy club members to show their projects

Some of the Alberta dairy industry's future leaders will meet in Red Deer at the 54th annual 4-H Provincial Dairy Show, where they'll have three days to show judges everything they've learned over the past year. The Show runs July 18 to 20, 2000 in conjunction with the Red Deer Westerner Exposition. It will test about 60 Alberta 4-H'ers on all aspects of the dairy industry and challenge them to show their skills in clipping, judging and handling their project animals. "The Dairy Show improves the delegates' abilities in all areas, and the competitiveness at this event is something they don't get at the club level. Plus it's a chance for them to share ideas and make new friends with other dairy club members," says organizer Linsey Chalack, provincial 4-H event coordinator with the 4-H Branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. About 90 project animals are expected at the 4-H Provincial Dairy Show, which is supported by the title sponsor Gas Alberta, Inc. and by the Alberta dairy industry and the Alberta 4-H Programs Trust. Events such as the judging contest, herdsmanship competition and showmanship classes give the participants the opportunity to display their practical knowledge and skills in raising and handling their animals. "Being involved in the 4-H Dairy program gives these members endless experiences and opportunities, whether their long-term goals are to be dairy farmers, official judges, or genetic sales reps," adds Chalack. The delegates attend workshops throughout the year and spend time every day with their animals to prepare for this show. The event is free of charge and open to the public. It will wrap up with an awards ceremony on the afternoon of July 20th. For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000 first), or visit the 4-H website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca>**.

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Weeds of the Prairies

Looking for a practical way to identify the weeds in your crop or garden? The new ***Weeds of the Prairies*** book gives detailed information for those who need a relatively non-technical aid to identify weeds. This second edition is a comprehensive field guide to the common weeds across the Canadian prairie provinces.

"***Weeds of the Prairies*** is all new and designed to be easy to use," says Linda Hall, co-author of the book and research scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "It doesn't contain every weed or native plant, but does include details on 112 weeds that can be found in agricultural fields, pastures, rangelands, waste areas, gardens and roadsides. I hope that everyone finds it as helpful and useful as I do.

"The focus is the photographs. The book is arranged by flower color to make it easier to sort out what that blue weed is. Like me, many people use the photographs first, then read the text to confirm identification. Great care was taken so that the text is readable. Finally, there are clues as to common habitat and where you are likely to find the weed. That way, if you are trying to decide between two weeds and one is found only in a Manitoba swamp – they are easier to sort out."

As well as the color-coding by flower color for easy reference, the full index makes it easy to find a species by common, scientific or family name. The book gives full-color photos of the weeds at different growth stages. Charts on life cycle and habitat provide valuable information, and the maps show where individual weeds are common. An opening section on weed identification gives tips on what to look for.

"This book is the result of many years and many contributions by numerous photographers, weed scientists and agricultural experts from B.C. to Ontario," adds Hall. "Weed descriptions were compiled from the observations and research of many botanists and weed scientists. I would like to thank my co-authors, Carol Bubar, PhD, PAg, Olds College and Susan McColl, PhD, PAg, University of Saskatchewan. The book will no doubt prove to be a very helpful guide for gardeners, farmers and crop scouts."

Along with the hundreds of color photos, the book features a durable cover to protect it and is coil bound to allow the user to open the book out flat when working with it in the field. This 266-page book (Agdex # 640-4) is priced at only $20, plus $2 shipping and handling for mail or phone orders.

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Weeds of the Prairies is available at all Alberta Agriculture regional advisory services offices and through the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. To order by phone, call (780) 4227-0391. For callers outside the Edmonton area, use Alberta Agriculture's Canadian toll free line 1-800-292-5697.

Contact: *Linda Hall*
(780) 422-1071

Partnerships for competitive advantage

With the rapidly changing marketplace driving the need to change the way business is done, partnering through innovative collaboration may be a strategy to consider no matter what market you're in. Agri-businesses are facing increased pressure from global markets, customer demands and ever-increasing competition. The expected benefit of partnering for agri-business is a competitive advantage.

Innovative collaboration is defined as new ways of working together or new ways of working with the enemy. Whichever definition, creative thinking and a clearly defined purpose for working together is required to achieve results.

In today's business environment, partnering goes by many names depending on the purpose of the arrangement. Some of the more popular terms are:

Consortium – includes similar businesses in similar industries that pool resources to gain a benefit they couldn't achieve on their own.

Joint venture – businesses are made up of businesses from different industries. Each business provides different resources to pursue a specific opportunity.

Strategic alliance – a longer term agreement between businesses for achieving common objectives.

Cooperative marketing – an agreement to market partners' products or services through joint promotion. For markets requiring a guarantee of large volumes of agri-product, a marketing cooperative may be a good option to meet this market demand that is difficult to fill by individual agri-preneurs.

Value-chain relationship – this type of a relationship occurs when businesses in different industries with different but complementary skills link their capital ties to create value for their customers.

Other business terms used in the food processing industry include: collaboration, supply chain alliances, vertical coordination, agri-chain competence and partner shipping.

There are several examples of innovative collaborations. For example, some agri-business are co-packing product. This is an arrangement to share food processing facilities. Hospital kitchens, caterers, restaurants or bakeries are possibilities for co-packing.

Contract growing is becoming more common. Many processors contract with producers to meet quality standards and supply requirements for a variety of products.

There are some cooperative marketing groups in Alberta that work together to consolidate individual marketing efforts. This allows for better supply management and market expansion.

Regional Food Processing Facilities have been established for food processing and product development.

In some cases a group of producers will get together to hire producer agents. These agents provide marketing expertise to develop and expand target markets.

Some agri-businesses are developing purchase arrangements. Under this arrangement, they purchase inputs and supplies as a group to take advantage of bulk purchase discounts.

Some companies turn to co-innovation. These companies work together with universities and research institutions to solve problems, establish product standards and improve technologies, and more.

Agri-businesses have only just begun to realize the opportunities and potential in the agri-food sector. The ability to cooperate with other companies or organizations and to create win-win situations will be a key factor in the expansion of the industry.

This is the eleventh article in ***Market Driven Agriculture ...Strategies for Success***, a series on how to develop a market focus in your business. The articles are presented by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development in partnership with Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association. For more business and market development information check the Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association websites at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/diversify**> and <**www.awei.ab.ca**>.

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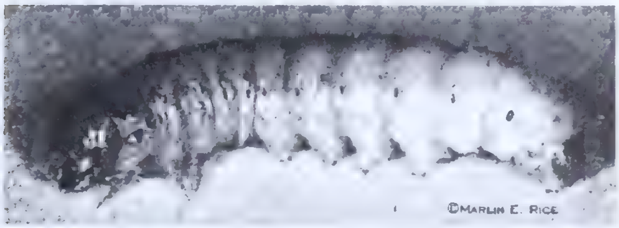
Glassy cutworm

Crop specialists in Alberta's Peace Region have been working flat out to deal with an outbreak of glassy cutworm in that area. Crop specialists encourage producers in other Alberta regions to stay informed of the situation. Widespread monitoring of timothy/fescue crops is recommended because recent reports suggest that infestations may not be entirely restricted to the Peace.

"The outbreak zone extends from Grande Prairie to Manning in the north, south to Valleyview, and west to Beaverlodge and Fort St. John; Debolt, in particular, was very severely infested," says Lloyd Dosdall, provincial entomologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Reports indicate that the outbreak is almost perfectly aligned with the areas severely stricken by drought in the past two years."

Recent rainfall in the Peace has been very important in reducing the impact of glassy cutworm. Crop specialists report increased root masses following the rains in fields where crops have survived, indicating that plants are now outgrowing and compensating for some cutworm damage. Nevertheless, crop losses from glassy cutworm will be in the millions of dollars for 2000.

"There are considerable size differences among larvae of glassy cutworm," adds Dosdall. "Some larvae are quite small, but in several locations there are reports of the onset of pupation. Continued monitoring of fields should be continued for some time yet. Adults are present from June to early September, and this could explain the range in size of larvae. Those that hatched later in 1999 would be less developed than larvae that hatched earlier and had more to time to grow and feed before winter."



Glassy cutworms are very difficult to kill because most individuals remain beneath the soil surface, and don't emerge at night to feed. The effects of treatment with Lorsban have been variable. Most Specialists estimate that treatment with 0.5 liters Lorsban in 20 liters of water per acre produced an estimated 30 per cent kill of larvae. For some farms, this was enough to enable crop plants to gain the edge over cutworms, but in other fields crops did not seem to respond as well. The best control was achieved by growers who sprayed just before or during a rainfall. The rainfall carried the insecticide down to the level of the larvae, resulting in over 90 per cent control.

"There have been reports of a field of timothy near Coaldale that was very heavily infested with glassy cutworm, and a 100-acre field of timothy near Westlock that was severely infested with this pest," says Dosdall. "This emphasizes the need to monitor susceptible crops in other regions besides the Peace."

In Beaverlodge, some tufts of timothy/fescue 20-30 cm in diameter had as many as 25 larvae while others had 1 to 15. Damaged fescue fields from glassy cutworm were also reported in the B.C. Peace region, including near Baldonnel and the Goodlow area.

"We are working to assess parasitism levels in Peace region populations of glassy cutworm so we can have some idea of the forecast for 2001," concludes Dosdall.

Contact: *Lloyd Dosdall*
(780) 422-4911

Cattle producers take aim at E. coli 0157:H7

While reassuring consumers that ground beef remains a safe and healthy product when proper food handling procedures are followed, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) has stated it will examine new research to determine if anything more can be done to manage and control E.coli 0157:H7.

"The cattle industry is not willing to put up with this bacteria if there is any way to prevent it," says Dennis Laycraft, CCA Executive Vice President. "We have been strong supporters of the adoption of HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) in all federally inspected plants. HACCP is the most effective method of safe food production available today. The cattle industry will continue to fund research into methods of managing, controlling or even eliminating E.coli 0157:H7 at both the farm and meat processing levels, as it has been for several years.

"In addition to these projects, CCA will examine new and current research around the world to determine what areas may require more attention. To this end the CCA plans to spearhead a national summit on E.coli 0157:H7."

Plans for this summit are in the preliminary stages. CCA is working to have the summit held as early as possible while still ensuring that experts on this issue are available to attend.

"While our preference would be to see E.coli 0157:H7 eliminated from the cattle population, that may not be possible since the bacteria is also carried by wildlife," says Laycraft. "This summit will hopefully help us determine the most practical solutions so we can concentrate on those areas."

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In the meantime there are steps the public can take to significantly reduce their exposure to this pathogen. These steps include the following:

- cook ground meat until it is no longer pink and the juices no longer show pink colour (it is safe to eat rare whole muscle cuts like steaks and roasts because the outside is cooked, eliminating any bacteria)
- wash hands thoroughly and frequently, especially after handling raw meat or livestock
- don't handle food if suffering from diarrhea
- don't cross-contaminate cooked foods or foods to be eaten raw with raw meats – don't re-use plates that have held raw meat; thoroughly wash dishes, cutting boards etc. that have been in contact with raw meat
- drink only pasteurized milk or cider
- drink water from a supply known to be safe. Private water supplies (i.e. wells) should be tested frequently.

For further information, contact Dennis Laycraft, CCA executive vice president at (403) 275-8558 or Cindy McCreath, CCA communications manager at (403) 275-8558. Information is also available on-line at the Beef Information Centre website <**www.beefinfo.org**>.

Contact: *Cindy McCreath*
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mccreathc@cattle.ca

Alberta 4-H'ers learn that every second counts

When the 4-H Club Week programs begin this summer, close to 200 Alberta 4-H'ers will make friends, challenge themselves and most of all learn how precious time really is.

Following the theme *Every Second Counts*, the program will underscore for members aged 15 to 21 the importance of not only making the most of each moment, but also of stopping to appreciate the small things that happen every day. "Small events have a huge and lasting impact on all of us," explained Club Week co-organizer Mark Muchka. "It's important to stop and recognize what's going on around us, because it's such a fast-paced world."

As delegates arrive at Olds College and proceed toward the main gym for their first large group meeting, they will be met by staff members in period costumes. Posing as everything from early Alberta settlers and natives to greasers from the 1950s and hippies from a decade later, these staff members will personify different points in time as well as mark the progression through time from the late 19th century right up to the present. With these images in mind, delegates will spend a week facing group and individual challenges, exploring personal and social issues with their peers and having some fun at the same time.

Set to run July 18 to 23 and again for a second session August 22 to 27, the program is considered by many delegates to be the highlight of their 4-H careers because of the friends they make and what they learn about themselves and each other. "Club Week is really about individual growth. It's about helping young people realize that only they can make their dreams come true," said Muchka.

Sponsored by Agricore, the Bank of Montreal, UFA, Agrium, Alberta Motor Association, Lammle's Western Wear and UGG, Club Week gives the participants a chance to talk to people who are facing and surmounting obstacles every day. Called *Overcoming Adversity*, this portion of the program introduces delegates to people who deal with the challenges of visual impairment, living with cancer and brain injury and adapting to life in a wheelchair. By seeing the twists and turns life can take, delegates are better prepared to learn from events they face.

"Unlike time, life varies and is not set in stone. With time comes experience and with experience comes personal development," said Muchka.

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dailling 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h**>.

Contact: *Mark Muchka*
(403) 948-8568
Marguerite Stark
(403) 948-8510
Cara McDuff
(403) 948-8568

Direct from the farm

"Late last fall, rural development specialists - business conducted four focus groups with farm direct marketers across the northwest and peace regions," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Westlock. "A total of 42 farms selling farm products direct to the consumer took part in the discussions. The products they were selling ranged from berries to organic beef to alpacas."

Here are some of the public relation ideas they shared:

Special events: have complimentary samples (they try it – they buy it), host tours, speak in schools, have demonstrations at special events, incorporate special events every weekend.

Education – teach adult education courses in your area of expertise (this builds up your reputation); give talks/tours to kindergarten classes; give eggs to the schools to hatch.

Cont'd on page 4

Community – get the newspaper to write a story about you; do things in the community, for example donate food to various functions; have product give-aways at community events; don't forget about word of mouth, tell everyone you know about your business; all these help build a high community profile for the business.

On-sight ideas – encourage on-farm visits; offer individualized service; have a highly trained staff; look professional in your world – you don't have to wear a suit to look professional, denim can look professional too; know your product so you can answer questions; have a picnic table for kids to play with play dough; entertain the kids; try an end of season promotion – give away fruit to high volume customers; have access to back-up product if there are problems; sell your enthusiasm; use your product when serving guests; enhance your product by creating an experience; have seating on your deck for visitors and/or picnic tables.

For more information on promoting farm products direct to the consumer, contact the local rural development specialist - business:

• Kerry Engel	Westlock	(780) 349-4465
• Lori-Jo Graham	Claresholm	(403) 625-1445
• Lisa Houle	Hanna	(403) 854-5500
• Sharon Homeniuk	Stony Plain	(780) 963-6101
• Tim Keating	Falher	(780) 837-2211
• Slav Heller	St. Paul	(780) 645-6301
• Donna Fleury	Airdrie	(403) 948-8537
• Janice McGregor	Morinville	(780) 939-4351
• Leona Reynolds-Zayak	Vermilion	(780) 853-8101
• Linda Hawk	Medicine Hat	(403) 529-3616
• Lynn Stegman	Lacombe	(403) 782-3301
• Jan Warren	Vulcan	(780) 485-2236
• Marian Williams	Camrose	(780) 679-1210

Contact: *Kerry Engel*
(780)349-4465

PEI trip a unique experience for Alberta 4-H'er

For Gerrid Wrubleski of New Sarepta, a trip to a Prince Edward Island forestry camp this summer will be more than an interesting way to spend his summer vacation, it will be preparation for a future career as a fish and game officer

Seventeen-year-old Wrubleski, a member of the New Sarepta Good News 4-H Multi-club,– hopes his trip to the Atlantic Provinces 4-H Young Foresters' Camp gives him some experience in working in forest ecosystems and teach him about the animals, fish and insects that inhabit them. As well, he wants to see the sights and tour around Canada's smallest province.

"I've always wanted to go out east, and thought this would be a pretty unique experience," he says. "I've heard they have red soil out there, so I'm taking a jar with me and bringing some back."

Wrubleski was chosen to take part in the camp during the 4-H Selections program, held April 28 to May 1 at Olds College. Every year about 60 Alberta 4-H members are chosen during Selections to take part in a variety of educational trips and exchanges across North America. Wrubleski says he was hoping to be selected for the trip to the Young Foresters' Camp because he has always enjoyed the outdoors. The camp should also help him toward his career goal, as it teaches participants map and compass work; tree, plant and insect identification; and, principles of forest management. He adds, "This was my number one choice. I didn't think I had a chance because there were so many people there, but I was pretty excited when my name was called."

Sponsored by the Alberta 4-H Programs Trust, the trip will give Wrubleski the chance to stay with a PEI host family from July 13 to 19, after which he will be in the Young Foresters' Camp until July 22. Having never seen the east coast before, Wrubleski is enthusiastic about his trip. "I'm pretty happy. This is a once in a life time opportunity," he says.

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dailling 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at < **www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h** >.

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(403) 948-8568

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Agri-News Briefs

Market Gardeners Go Hi-Tech

The Alberta Market Gardeners Association (AMGA), 183 producers of locally grown direct-market fruits and vegetables, are making information about Alberta's horticultural crops industry, their Association, and their members, easily available to the public and consumers. They have initiated a website **<www.amga.ab.ca/>** that includes information on the industry, crop seasons, recipes, upcoming events and courses, harvesting tips, links to related sites, and more. The AMGA's *Come to Our Farm* brochure, listing members' operations and available produce, is also posted on-line. Viewers can pull up a specific farm by choosing an area of the province and centring in on specific farm locations. The Alberta market garden industry continues to expand to meet demands. A visit to a market garden not only provides a trunk full of the freshest and best tasting locally grown produce, but also the opportunity to meet the family dedicated to growing these crops, and get a bit of fresh air.

Second annual Saskatoon Berry Festival

The Fruit Growers Society of Alberta and the U of A Devonian Botanic Gardens (DBG) are hosting the second annual Saskatoon Berry Festival on July 30, 2000 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the DBG, Edmonton. Activities include Saskatoon berry tasting, cooking demonstrations, entertainment, children's activities, Saskatoon berry product tables and information centres. John Berry, Edmonton's own 'berry king', will demonstrate his culinary talents on the barbecue and offer a variety of unique flavors for participants to sample. Fresh berries, native fruit trees, berry inspired foods and crafts will be sold. Join the festival in a celebration of the senses featuring the sights, smells and delicious tastes of Alberta grown fruit and fruit products. There is a small fee for entrance into the DBG. For further information, contact Nadine Stielow at (780) 998-0481 or Shirley Alton (780) 998-2782.

Pasture for Profits tour

Producers interested in increasing forage and beef production on pasture are invited to take in the ***Pasture for Profits*** tour, July 19, 2000, in Pipestone Creek. The tour, co-sponsored by Alberta Agriculture, and the Counties of Wetaskiwin and Leduc, includes practical information on how to assess and protect sensitive riparian areas along creeks and dugouts. On the tour, producers will see: an 800 acre custom grazing operation with 80 cow-calf pairs, 20 heifers and 300 yearling steers; a custom grazing operation with 700 yearling heifers grazing on 350 acres of alfalfa and 80 acres of annual rye grass; some unique pasture watering systems including springs and dugouts gravity-fed to stock tanks, a well and pipeline system, and a gas powered pump and portable truck mounted tank watering system; a winterized solar powered remote cattle watering system designed by Blake Clausen from Stettler; a hands on opportunity to assess what makes up a healthy riparian area along a creek; various varieties of tame grasses, alfalfa and discussions on pasture management and fertility; spring and fall triticale plots; and, forage and pasture variety plots. They will also involved in discussions on pasture layouts, cattle handling systems, bee production and cattle treatments on pasture. Cost of the tour is $15 per person. The tour bus leaves the Pipestone Creek school at 9:00 a.m. sharp, returning at 4:00 p.m. Host families on the tour will be available to discuss their operations and answer questions. County and Alberta Agriculture specialists will be making presentations during the tour on forage and beef production, pasture watering systems, pasture management and the importance of healthy riparian areas. To register, please call one of the following offices:

• Wetaskiwin	– District Agriculture Office	361-1240
	– County - Ag Fieldman	352-3321
• Leduc	– District Agriculture Office	986-8985
	– County - Ag Services	955-3555 ext 288

Agri-News

July 24, 2000

Tillage erosion

Wind and water are the two factors most often thought of when it comes to soil erosion. However another little understood factor may have an even greater impact on erosion. Tillage loosens and buries protective stubble exposing soil to the destructive elements of nature and also moves and displaces soil within the field. David Lobb, a soil scientist with the University of Manitoba, refers to this as tillage translocation and tillage erosion.

"Tillage erosion redistributes soil within the field but does not result in a loss of soil from the field," says Peter Gamache, program manager of the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), Edmonton. "Lobb has measured soil movement of as much as four metres with one pass of a cultivator equipped with sweeps. Movement is the result of the design and operation of the tillage implement and topographic and soil properties of the field. Lobb has found that the heavy duty cultivator and tandem disc can cause as much erosion as the mouldboard plough."

Tillage causes a progressive downslope movement of soil, resulting in severe soil loss on hills and knolls and accumulations in the lower slope positions. The downslope pass of the cultivator moves more soil downslope than an corresponding pass upslope. We see this when topsoil is lost from knolls and ridges, exposing lighter colored subsoil. Lobb and other researchers suggest that tillage erosion is the cause of the majority of soil loss in hilly land. They also note that it even occurs on very level land. An Agriculture Canada estimate suggests that 50 per cent of the cropland in Canada was subject to unsustainable levels of tillage erosion in 1996, far less than the 15 per cent estimates for cropland at risk from water erosion.

"Tillage erosion impacts cropland in several ways," adds Gamache. "The variability of soil properties within the field is increased, subsoil is exposed and topsoil is moved downslope. Yield losses of 40 to 50 per cent have been associated with severely eroded knolls in Alberta. The exposed subsoil is highly erodible to wind and water."

Tillage also transports valuable topsoil to lower areas. These areas are subject to concentrated water flow where significant erosion can occur from spring runoff and during intense rain storms. The infiltration capacity of the eroded knolls is reduced resulting in more water flowing over the surface. The

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Alberta AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

eroded soil typically has reduced water holding capacity, less organic matter, fewer nutrients and, therefore, is less productive than uneroded soil.

The best way to avoid tillage erosion is to eliminate tillage, something many zero tillers and direct seeders are doing. For those who still use tillage, several practices can help reduce tillage erosion:

- eliminate unnecessary operations. Tillage should only be done when soil conditions are suitable – don't till if it means you have to do another pass to correct the problems you created
- operate tillage implements at minimum recommended depth and speed
- avoid tillage implements that are very long and/or very wide on undulating and hilly land that is susceptible to tillage erosion
- use flexible frame cultivators which follow the contour of the land better than rigid frames
- use contour tillage. Avoid going up and down slopes where possible

It may not look like much soil is moving downslope, but a loss of only one millimetre per hectare of topsoil is equal to 10 tonnes and is not sustainable over the long run.

If you are concerned about tillage erosion and the impact tillage has on soils get in touch with an ARTI agronomist. For more information call Gamache at (780) 427-3361. Government numbers are toll free by dialing 310-0000 first.

Contact: Peter Gamache
(780) 427-3361

Bringing trend information back to the farm

Many farmers produce a product and then look to see who will buy it. We call that having a production focus. The opposite of having a production focus is having a market focus. A market focus enables you to view the production cycle in terms of what the end user or final buyer wants. Very few consumers actually want a 500 kg steer clipping the grass in their front yards. They are, in most cases, looking for a specialized edible, consumer-oriented product, not the bulk commodity.

Market focused people seek out market opportunities consistent with customer demands," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist-business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Westlock. "They understand their customers' ongoing needs because they get as close to the customer as they can."

Market focused people ask a lot of questions. For example, a production focused person might read a *What's Hot* or *Food Industry Trends List* and say "that's nice, what's it got to do with me"? A market focused person starts to ask a lot of questions. Questions related to the potential customer on a trend list.

"The April 2000 edition of ***Food Processing Magazine*** highlights some upcoming trends," adds Engel. "Asking a few market focused question about each trend can really give you an indication of how that trend may affect your business or product."

- ***Trend # 1*** – blueberry will be replacing cranberry as the national favorite fruit flavor. *Who is using blueberries and are they looking for the next unique flavor-like the Saskatoon berry?*
- ***Trend # 2*** – the burrito fad will continue into dessert selections. *Who sells dessert burritos? What sort of fillings are they using in dessert burrito's? Are they looking for local, heritage berries? How many berries do they need? What format do they need (fresh, frozen)?*
- ***Trend # 3*** – Americans will go wild at least in their food choices (wild mushrooms and wild game). *Where are American's buying their wild products? What varieties/ cuts are they using? Who supplies the product?*

The next time you're reading about a trend in the consumer food market – ask yourself some questions. Ask your customers some questions. You may discover an opportunity.

For more information on developing a market focus contact one of Alberta Agriculture's rural development specialists – business and ask for the latest copy of the ***Northwest Processor*** newsletter. The *Northwest Processor* links market focused farm managers and processors with food industry information, technology and research. It is published quarterly and is free of charge.

Alberta Agriculture's rural development specialists – business:

Kerry Engel	Westlock	(780) 349-4465
Lori-Jo Graham	Claresholm	(403) 625-1445
Lisa Houle	Hanna	(403) 854-5500
Sharon Homeniuk	Stony Plain	(780) 963-6101
Tim Keating	Falher	(780) 837-2211
Slav Heller	St. Paul	(780) 645-6301
Donna Fleury	Airdrie	(403) 948-8537
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Leona Reynolds-Zayak	Vermilion	(780) 853-8101
Linda Hawk	Medicine Hat	(403) 529-3616
Lynn Stegman	Lacombe	(403) 782-3301
Jan Warren	Vulcan	(780) 485-2236
Marian Williams	Camrose	(780) 679-1210

Contact: Kerry Engel
(780)349-4465

A report card to the special crops industry

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has made a strong commitment to crop diversification. A meeting was held in Brooks on June 22, 2000, to present a report card on Alberta Agriculture activities to stakeholders in the Alberta special crops industry. Some of the comments from participants included:

- "We already see how value-adding to new crops has increased jobs and helped the economy in our community."
- "It is important that we keep trying to identify new crops which can make money for Alberta farmers."
- "How do we get the necessary production and market information that will let us decide on whether we consider diversification on our farm?"

"The Special Crops Product Team (SCPT) invited a wide array of producers, processors, commodity groups and private industry representatives to learn about what Alberta Agriculture is doing to strengthen crop diversification efforts in the province," says Dr. Stan Blade, leader of the new crop development unit at Alberta Agriculture's Crop Diversification Centre North, Edmonton. "Crop diversification requires a long term commitment to research, development and commercialization; if we are serious about continuing to diversify Alberta's agricultural base it will require a strong commitment from all partners."

The SCPT has served as a catalyst to assist the special crops industry. The work of the Team was recently recognized when it received the Premier's Award of Excellence. The SCPT is made up of members from Alberta Agriculture, as well as individuals from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Alberta Research Council and the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration.

The report card covered five specific areas that the SCPT has targeted for supporting the industry. Some of the highlights include:

Research:

- A recent agreement between Alberta and Saskatchewan pulse organizations and plant breeders at CDC North (Edmonton) and the University of Saskatchewan will make new pulse crop varieties from either breeding program available to Alberta growers at lower cost.
- New researchers have been hired to conduct research in new crops agronomy (Peace Region and Brooks) and integrated weed management (Brooks).
- A new pulse production manual written and published by Alberta Agriculture – ***Pulse Crops in Alberta***.
- Alberta Agriculture staff have produced a CD-ROM with text, photos and video entitled ***Herb and Spice Production and Processing***.

Economics and Marketing:

- The SCPT has facilitated the production of a quarterly newsletter, a directory of special crops industry stakeholders, internet web boards to assist the industry in marketing its products.
- Alberta Agriculture has initiated work to develop costs of production and crops budgets for new and emerging special crops.
- The initiation of the Alberta New Crops Network has been supported by Alberta Agriculture personnel and resources.

Value-Adding and Processing:

- A commitment by the Leduc Food Processing Development Centre to put a high priority on work with special crops.
- Initiation of discussions with the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission on pulse quality.
- Provincial pulse and special crops specialists working on a ***New Crops Initiative*** to provide a decision system for the evaluation of new crops.

Policy Development and Regulation:

- Development of a responsive consultation process with industry stakeholders.
- Working with Agricultural Financial Services Corporation to expand crop insurance program coverage to include additional special crops.

Projects and Special Events

- SCPT partnered with CV Technologies to create a ***Special Crops Scholarship*** to benefit University of Alberta students with an interest in special crops.
- SCPT has supported the ***Go Organic*** conference, the International Herb Conference (July, 2000 in Saskatoon) and is co-sponsor of the Western Canadian Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Conference (March, 2001 in Edmonton).

"The group recognized that diversification must overcome the pitfalls of overproduction, price volatility, lack of production and market information," adds Blade. "Several participants pointed out that despite these problems, there are many opportunities for new crops in the province. The *Industry Report Card* was another step in ensuring that Alberta's agricultural sector continues its path towards further diversification."

Contact: *Dr. Stan Blade*
(780) 415-2311

When to price pooled wheat

Producers who still have grain to deliver in this crop year against any of the CWB contracts (A through D), should evaluate delivery into the current 1999-2000 pooling year against pricing into the next pooling year beginning August 1. The decision will be based on CWB Pool Return Outlooks (P.R.O.), your interpretation of outlook, your risk-taking attitude and your cash flow needs.

"In 1997-98, a record 609 million tonne world wheat crop built up global stocks on-hand to 140 million tonnes," says Doug Walkey, market specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lacombe. "In the last two years, world wheat consumption has exceeded production, reducing world stocks in the latest USDA estimate to 125.9 million tonnes."

The same USDA report forecast the ending stocks level for the year 2000-2001 down to 106.3 million tonnes, implying a stocks/use ratio of under 18 per cent. Normally wheat stocks/use ratios hover near 20 per cent. If the forecast is correct the new ratio would be lower than when wheat last rallied in 1995-96. Historically, there has been a direct relationship between prices and ending stock levels. However, the relationship did not work in the last two years, when prices fell even with lower world ending stocks. This lack of performance was due to the large amount of stocks held by the major exporters, and weak economies of importing countries. While the world's major wheat exporters are again projected to carry significant wheat stocks, their stock levels are projected to fall in 2000-01. This should support world wheat prices next year.

The latest 1999-2000 crop year PRO from the Canadian Wheat Board estimated port-based returns for # 1 (13.5) CWRS wheat at $191/tonne. Subtracting elevator deductions (variable by area) for cleaning, freight and elevation, implies a $147/tonne elevator-delivered return. The latest PRO for the 2000-01 crop year estimates a port-based price range of 193-223/tonne for # 1 (13.5) CWRS wheat. Using the $208/tonne mid-point of this range, minus estimated elevator deductions of $40/tonne (which incorporates an expected freight rate reduction), gives an estimated $168/tonne elevator-delivered return. For high protein CWRS wheat, it appears that pricing into the new crop year may be well worth considering.

"You can deliver now against this year's contract, designate the delivery to the next crop year 2000-2001 and receive payment August 1, based on next crop year's initial price," says Walkey. "The proceeds could be applied to any remaining grain advance outstanding August 1, without going into default."

Depending on delivery timing, the receiving grain company may assess some storage costs. Results of the price comparison for CPS, Extra Strong and Winter wheats are similar. The risk is that the forecast new crop PRO will fall from current levels. Check with buyers or a Market Specialist for help to assess the choices for your situation.

Contact: *Doug Walkey*
(403) 782-3301

Parkland winter cereals initiative

Winter cereals have been important crops in southern Alberta for many years. They have also been proven to provide a good economic cropping alternative in Alberta's parkland area. To help build awareness, and to provide some agronomic support, the Parkland Winter Cereals Initiative was launched this spring.

The partners of the initiative include the Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Agronomy Unit and Regional Advisory Services, and Ducks Unlimited. The Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Program is providing some funding support.

"Through this partnership, we have a three-year commitment to work together to meet two key strategies," explains Barry Bishop, agrologist with Ducks Unlimited, Camrose. "The first is a core growers strategy, and the second is a train-the-trainers program."

Under the core growers strategy, the initiative will work with innovative community leaders who are capable of championing the extension effort. "We will provide these growers with agronomic support to assist them in winter cereal production. We believe a group of successful core growers across the Alberta parkland will increase awareness about the benefits of winter cereal production," says Bishop.

The train-the-trainers program will focus on extension and industry agronomists, the main source of information for many growers. Training is provided to this group to ensure they have the most up-to-date research and information to support growers' efforts in winter cereal production.

Both growers and trainers will benefit from results coming from research by Alberta Agriculture's agronomy unit. "The agronomy unit currently has research trials across Alberta, including here at Vegreville, to test different varieties of winter cereals, as well as fertilizer placement," says Dale Chrapko, conservation coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Vegreville.

The initiative will work with core growers over the three years to provide them with resources and one-on-one agronomic support.

"We will be holding activities to get growers together so they can support each other and to increase awareness in the agricultural community based on grower experience," says Bishop. "One of the key messages is that winter cereals are viable agronomically and economically in the Alberta parkland and that winter cereals are an excellent fit in the cropping rotations."

For growers in the parkland area, winter cereals provide many benefits. "In areas where it tends to be fairly dry, growing winter cereals allows farmers to take advantage of early spring moisture," says Chrapko. "Winter cereals also allow growers to harvest the crop before the real heat hits in August."

Including winter cereals in rotation spreads out the workload at seeding time. However, growers have to plan their fall workload carefully to fit seeding of winter cereals in with harvesting of spring-seeded crops.

"Livestock producers can really benefit from growing winter triticale and fall rye in rotation," explains Chrapko. "In this area, winter triticale is an excellent crop for silage and offers a lot of advantages. Some feedlot operators like growing winter triticale because it spreads out the silage year by starting earlier. As well, triticale doesn't bleach as much as barley does in hot weather.

"Feedlot operators also like including triticale in their crop rotations because it is such a high nitrogen user and will utilize the manure that has been spread on fields. Winter cereals have other important environmental benefits, too. They provide excellent spring nesting cover for several bird species and other wildlife benefits. Winter cereals should be seeded into standing stubble, which traps snow for reduced winter kill and increased spring soil moisture. Standing stubble also eliminates soil erosion in winter and spring."

"Winter cereals also have an economic advantage over spring cereals," explains Bishop. "The advantage is more of a long-term economic advantage that doesn't always show up on an annual partial budget. At the national/prairie-wide level, we're undertaking an economic analysis of existing winter cereal growers to evaluate the whole farm benefits of growing winter cereals."

Contact: *Dale Chrapko*
(780) 632-5466

Barry Bishop
(780) 672-6786

4-H and Agriculture Canada team up to benefit youth

"The Alberta 4-H ***People Developing People*** camps are about to take on new developments of their own when aboriginal, urban and out-of-province delegates join 4-H members at the programs this summer.

The PDP camps, running July 23 to 28, July 30 to August 4 and August 13 to 18 at the Alberta 4-H Centre on Battle Lake, focus on personal development, the environment and leadership skills. This year, each camp is joined by five aboriginal, five urban and two out-of-province delegates, giving all participants the added benefit of meeting people from different cultural and geographic backgrounds.

"This is only possible through a grant from Agriculture and Agrifood Canada," explains Marguerite Stark, provincial 4-H programs specialist, Airdrie. "The federal government has a fundamental role in providing linkages among Canadians. We're adding a new component to the People Developing People camps through this cultural-urban exchange program."

Sponsored by Agricore, Lammle's Western Wear, Peavey Mart, UFA and Weyerhaeuser Canada, the camps give delegates aged 13 to 15 the chance to meet new people and discuss issues of concern to youth. It also gives them the chance to build leadership and cooperation skills while exploring environmental issues in a role playing game that requires the delegates to resolve conflicting land use plans for an imaginary 4-H ranch. This year the camps are being visited by a professional improv group that will work with delegates on personal development skills. Presentations and craft sessions organized by the native delegates and an ethnic dinner are also new components to the PDP programs. By the time delegates leave, they will not only have made new friends and gained a greater appreciation for the diversity Canada enjoys, but will be better prepared to face the challenges that lay ahead of them.

"This is a chance for them to gain a new appreciation for other cultures, and a place where all the delegates can share their ideas," said Ryan Lucas, a member of the 4-H summer programs team and co-organizer of PDP. "We want them to come to camp and get a fresh outlook so they can go back to their communities and make a difference."

For more information on joining 4-H call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000, first) or visit the website at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca**>.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
Provincial 4-H Programs Specialist
(403) 948-8510

Ryan Lucas
4-H Summer Staff
(403) 948-8568

Save money while lowering greenhouse gas emissions

"Reducing energy consumption can be a practical way for processors to reduce operating costs while reducing greenhouse gas emissions," says Dave Ritchie, industry development officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. This is the key finding from information recently developed by the Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA).

AFPA is a non-profit organization committed to helping Alberta's food and beverage companies to compete in the domestic and global marketplace. One of AFPA's objectives is to develop and provide training in environmental management, including emerging environmental issues, such as greenhouse gases, so processors can meet the challenges of the 21st century.

"The energy consumption information developed by AFPA is part of its efforts to increase understanding of the greenhouse gas issue and accelerate adoption of energy-efficient practices by processors," explains Ritchie. "Energy consumption is important because burning of fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas."

With cost-shared funding from the processing component of the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Program, AFPA developed a compendium of energy-efficiency information, including case studies. This information identifies opportunities to reduce emissions while reducing operating costs, such as:

- energy-efficient boilers – 5 to 15 per cent savings
- building envelope – 30 to 60 per cent savings
- chilling and freezing – 10 to 30 per cent savings
- compressed air – 10 to 40 per cent savings
- energy-efficient motors – 3 to 10 per cent savings
- heating, ventilation and air conditioning – 10 to 40 per cent savings
- energy-efficient lighting – 20 to 60 per cent savings
- process energy – 10 to 50 per cent savings
- product storage – 15 to 60 per cent savings
- transportation – 10 to 40 per cent savings

AFPA has already distributed the energy-efficiency information to processors who attended two recent workshops in Calgary and Edmonton. AFPA is making the information available for sale by contacting the AFPA office at (780) 444-2272.

"This project provides a number of important benefits," says Ritchie. "Alberta processors are gaining a better understanding of the greenhouse gas/climate change issue. They're better able to identify effective methods to reduce emissions. And they'll be more competitive in the marketplace as they reduce their energy costs."

For more information on greenhouse gas emissions and on this project, contact Ritchie at (780) 422-2556.

AFPA intends to continue to pursue greenhouse gas conservation programming on behalf of Alberta food processors. For more information, contact AFPA president, Ken Gibson at (780) 444-2272.

Contact: *Dave Ritchie*
(780) 422-2556

Agri-News Briefs

Sclerotinia could be a problem this year

Sclerotinia is a disease that is highly dependant on weather conditions and in many areas of Alberta the conditions appear to be ideal for the disease. This is a disease that needs spores from the apotecia to cause a problem on crops. However, with so much canola production in the past, it is very likely that the innoculum is floating through the breezes. If current weather conditions persist, sclerotinia is likely to be a problem, particularly on fields with a high yield potential and even more so if the variety is prone to lodging. Sclerotinia, or white mould, will be on the leaves now, and will affect the stems and their transportation system later on. This disease can result in reduced seed production and bushel weight. For further information, contact Jay Byer, cereal and oilseed specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (780) 826-3388, Bonnyville, or contact your local Alberta Agriculture cereal and oilseed specialist.

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Come to our farms

The Alberta Market Gardeners Association (AMGA) has 183 producers of locally grown direct-market fruits and vegetables throughout the province. Each year, this growing association publishes its ***Come to our Farms*** brochure listing member operations and the produce available at each site. The publication is set up in an easy-to-follow format, complete with sites marked on northern and central-southern maps of Alberta. For a free copy of the Come to our Farms brochure, contact the AMGA at 1-800-661-AMGA (2642), or visit Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's publications office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6 or any of the Alberta Agriculture district offices. Information contained in the Come to our Farms brochure is also available on-line at AMGA's website **<www.amga.ab.ca/>**. A visit to one of Alberta's market gardens is fun for the whole family and a chance to pick up some fresh, Alberta grown produce.

Berries in Alberta

Four new factsheets, ***Strawberries in Alberta*** (Agdex #232/20-4) ***Currants and Gooseberries in Alberta*** (Agdex #236/20-1); ***Raspberries in Alberta*** (Agdex #237/20-1); and, ***Saskatoons in Alberta*** (Agdex #238/20-1) have been produced by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. The factsheets cover topics such as where and when to plant, propagation, fertilization, cultivating, pruning, berry nutrition, maintenance and winter protection. Various cultivars are also described, information includes bush size, fruit size and color, pest and disease resistance. These free factsheets are available at the Alberta Agriculture publications office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, or at all Alberta Agriculture regional advisory service offices.

Sheep unique I.D. consultation meetings

The Canadian Sheep Federation (CSF), provincial sheep associations and the Canadian Sheep Breeders' Association (CSBA) will be holding consultations with producers and stakeholders in the sheep industry across Canada. The Alberta meetings are scheduled for August 9, 2000, at 1:00 p.m. at the Highwood Livestock Auction and on August 10 at 10:00 a.m. at the Nisku Inn. The meetings are intended to determine producers and industry stakeholders position on a unique national I.D. program for sheep. This traceback program, similar to the program being instituted by the cattle industry, would protect consumers and also producers and livestock. A draft document explaining the issues in a national identification program is available from the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission. Copies of the document are available by contacting Tony Stolz or Margaret Cook at (403) 948-8533. The document is also available on the Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission internet site at **<http://www.therockies.com/aswc/news.htm#11>**.

Ellerslie Crop Diagnostics Field School

The Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI) is offering farmers the chance to attend the diagnostics field school conducted by the agronomy unit of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development at Ellerslie on the south side of Edmonton. The field school is the best field training available for farmers and agronomists in Alberta. The plots are designed to produce symptoms to show the results of agronomic decisions. ARTI sponsored days are: July 20, 25 and August 1.The cost is $25 per person. The following modules are available: **Direct Seeding** (2 hours) – soil temperatures, residue management, weed control and fertility; **Pulse Crops** (2 hours) – fertility, weed control and varieties; **Herbicides and Weed Control** (1.5 hours) – herbicide groups, new products and integrated weed management; and **Crop Staging** (30 minutes) – BBCH scale in cereals and broadleaf crops.For more information phone: Peter Gamache (780) 427-3361.

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Watershed groups in Alberta

A number of municipalities and communities around Alberta have recently formed watershed groups to address water quality, riparian management and other issues in their local watersheds. Although every watershed group is initiated differently, there are some ideas from established groups that new groups can use to get started.

Tim Dietzler, Agricultural Fieldman with the M.D. of Rocky View is involved with three different watershed groups. The Rosebud-Serviceberry Watershed Group (including Crossfield and Carstairs Creeks) started as an extension of an existing group in the County of Wheatland. With thousands of landowners in the watershed, it's a challenge to find representative groups.

"Our goal is to get information out through a few representatives living in the watershed who are involved in advising and directing the process, and can take the message back to other landowners," says Dietzler.

Another watershed, the Nose Creek and West Nose Creek, has the City of Calgary and the City of Airdrie as its two largest landowners. "This group has very different stakeholders, and is influenced by development policies, storm water runoff and other factors for both cities," says Dietzler.

The third group is called Farmers of the Elbow Watershed. It has developed an informal partnership along the Elbow River in response to Alberta Environment water monitoring data.

"With all three of these groups, there are some critical components that were key to getting established," adds Dietzler. "It's important to have a reason to form a group, and we've found that having local water quality monitoring data near the beginning of the process provides a good basis to work from. We've also found that it's vital to have someone like an Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development organizations specialist (RDS-O) involved right at the beginning to assist with setting goals and direction, and determining priorities."

Laura Lee Billings, an Alberta Agriculture rural development specialist – organizations at Three Hills, believes that establishing such groups should be a collaborative process, involving all the stakeholders early on in the process. "One of the first steps, and a key to success, is building awareness in the community," says Billings.

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Billings began working with the M.D. of Kneehill (Ghost Pine, Three Hills and Knee Hill Creeks) and County of Mountain View (Lone Pine, Serviceberry and Kneehill Creeks) to increase awareness with the public. She also facilitated some of the initial public meetings and watershed group planning meetings.

"They started with monitoring, a newsletter (Up the Creek With a Paddle), a travelling display and a few initial meetings with key producers," says Billings. "They held public meetings this winter, attracting over 80 in Carstairs and over 100 in Kneehill.

"From those two meetings evolved watershed groups that have identified some key issues to address and are establishing leadership and action plans. Although it can be a challenge, it's important to try and involve all stakeholders right from the beginning and to have a consensus-based decision-making process. If you start with this process, the group will be more sustainable because people feel they have been part of the decision-making process and feel they have been heard."

"Every group is different, and each group has to do what works best for them," says Carmen Andrew, Alberta Agriculture's rural development specialist - organizations in Stettler. "I'm finding there really isn't a right or wrong way to get started.

"One group, the Little Red Association, started with a grassroots approach by a couple of local producers with concerns about the watershed. They obtained some support from PFRA, and held an awareness meeting this winter. As a result, the group has formed a non-profit society and is moving ahead with funding from PFRA and support from Alberta Agriculture and the Red Deer County."

Andrew is starting to work with the Sylvan Lake Water Stewardship Association. It is primarily urban-focused and includes the town of Sylvan Lake and surrounding summer villages. "I attended a meeting in April with this group, who did not have any agriculture people involved and didn't know where to start," explains Andrew. "They had already formed an association, had done a number of surveys and water quality studies, but realized they didn't have all the stakeholders involved. The association is now planning to have a series of meetings with farmers living in the watershed and summer villages."

Every group has its own unique needs, goals and objectives. "One priority is to ensure key community leaders are involved, and to begin monitoring upfront to provide a baseline to work from," says Dietzler. "The next step is to get a commitment by stakeholders, including municipal councils, to move forward, and then to acquire some long-term financial support. It's also important to involve government agencies with responsibilities in these areas, such as Alberta Environment and Alberta Health. They can provide valuable technical input."

Contact: *Carmen Andrew* *(403) 742-7500* · *Laura Lee Billings* *(403) 443-8525*

Marketing marriage

Current trends are creating opportunities for fruit and vegetable growers to undertake a marketing marriage with the urban tourist. Find out what the urban customer is looking for, see if it fits with your business plans and perhaps you'll find yourself in a very rewarding relationship.

Marketing marriage – a marriage of sorts, has taken place across North America between the agriculture and tourism industries. Agriculture brings to this union the places, tourism the people. To quote one Alberta Market Gardener, "I'm a farmer until June, and then I take my cap off and I'm in the entertainment industry."

What would drive an urbanite to the farm? – the urban population has increased the number of shorter holidays and day-trips it's taking. People are looking to unwind, get away from the city and search out adventure. Alberta farms provide them with the unique settings, good experiences and wholesome images. All in all, a very impressive drawing card!

How to attract urban Albertans? Festivals attract attention – many fruit and vegetable growers have implemented festivals into their businesses. Books have been written on the subject but to sum up a successful festival in three words, you need: food, music and pony rides, in other words, children's activities.

Unique partnerships attract attention too – for smaller gardens or greenhouses without large events, it's important to work in cooperation with others. For example, rural greenhouses can join forces with other small rural greenhouses to promote a *Spring Flower Tour*. A brochure and map outlining a *circle tour* could highlight the specialties grown at each greenhouse. Attract the urban consumer looking for something different, to meet the growers and breath some country air. Include a few other attractions on the circle tour, like unique places to eat and visit.

How to keep tourists coming – there is a pretty basic formula for keeping people on the farm. The ingredients are: food, activities, food, fun, amenities and food.

What else do you need? – to bring in tourist trade you need: an orientation to the site, washroom, food/drink, rest areas/ meeting points, play component, group staging, senior friendly and a safety/first aid component. You also want to make a great first impression. This can be achieved by proper signage, access, parking, posted hours/days of operation, a Greet & Meet program, curb appeal (an attractive entrance) and a safe environment.

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Develop a theme – be it prairies, berries or Halloween, a theme can help tie it all together. Take a theme and work it through the various components of your farm:

- at the play station – why have an ordinary slide when you can have a lighthouse, grain elevator or pumpkin shaped slide. Don't forget to fill the sandbox with theme shaped toys
- create a photo-opportunity. Build and paint a sign that people can stick their faces in and take pictures of. The name of your business on the sign, will be forever captured in their photo albums
- be creative in naming the food on your menu for example: prairie dogs, berry blasts or boo juice
- don't forget signs. Entrance, customer parking and directional signs are needed throughout the farm. Many a creative creatures have been created from blueberries, saskatoons and carrots – create a fruit or vegetable mascot to point the way
- do you have bags, baskets or boxes? What do they say on them? Make sure the farm name and number are printed boldly to extend your visibility
- kids love stickers and washable tattoos. These are a great place to put your mascot's cartoon image
- your staff can carry a logo on the backs or fronts of their shirts or aprons or on their caps and hats. Logo's can be silk screened or embroidered anywhere nowadays. Why not embroider your web site on the back of your company shirts?

This column originally appeared in the March issue of the Fruit & Vegetable magazine <**www.fruitandveggie.com**>.

For further information, contact one of Alberta Agriculture's rural development specialists – business:

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California exchange part of a great year for 4-H'ers

To say 17-year-old Meghan Clark of Calmar is having a good year in 4-H would be an understatement

Clark, a member of the Calmar Heart of the Country 4-H Multi-club, earned the top spot in both her club and district public speaking competitions, then won third-place honours at the 4-H Provincial Public Speaking Finals in April. A month later she was chosen as one of the contenders for the Premier's Award, one of the highest honours bestowed on Alberta 4-H members, and was also selected as a provincial 4-H Ambassador. And now, to top it all off, she will visit California from August 11-13 as one of two Alberta delegates to the California Annual 4-H Leadership Conference.

"This has been my best year in 4-H. I went for the gusto this past year, and it has definitely worked in my favour," says Clark. She and Dale Sandberg of Fort Macleod were chosen for the California trip during the 4-H Selections program, held April 28 to May 1 at Olds College. Sponsored by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, the California visit gives not only Alberta 4-H'ers a chance to sharpen their leadership skills at the conference, but also gives them the opportunity to meet new people during a home stay in California, and to see how their American counterparts run their 4-H programs. For Clark, the prospect of exchanging ideas with 4-H'ers south of the border made this trip the one she most wanted to take.

"I've been to 32 of the 50 states and I've travelled all over Canada. What I wanted was to go somewhere to met people and learn something new," she explains. "The California trip looked really interesting."

Sandberg, a member of the Fort Macleod 4-H Beef Club, also hopes to learn more about American 4-H programs, and wants to pick up some new ideas in California that he can bring back to his club. "It's a chance to see how they run things there. You can learn a lot from trips like this," says Sandberg, who has traveled across the eastern US and was one of the Canadian delegates to the National Stock Show in Denver, Colorado, last January. "Their style is so different in the states, so maybe we can learn something new and change things up here a bit."

Selections is an annual 4-H program which brings together some of the province's top 4-H members to discuss issues of concern to youth. During the program, about 60 delegates are chosen to represent Alberta 4-H in a variety of events across North America over the coming year. The Selections trips, which include exchanges to eastern Canada, Montana, and Washington DC, among other educational excursions, begin in July and conclude early next year.

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For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll-free in Alberta by dailling 310-0000, first), or visit the 4-H website at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h**>.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
Provincial 4-H Programs Specialist
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Grazing management of northern rangelands

Home Study and Public Lands has released the ***Grazing Management of Northern Rangelands*** home study course. The course is a complete guide to grazing northern rangelands. It uses a step-by-step approach to help range managers develop an ecologically based range management plan. Producers can work through the materials at their own convenience and apply the information to their own grazing operation.

"If you raise cattle in northern Alberta, you can profit from grazing forested pastures by using ecological principles and practices of range management," says Gerry Ehlert, manager, provincial grazing reserves, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Grazing Management of Northern Rangelands includes a resource manual, a plant identification book called ***Northern Range Plants***, a compact Monitoring Journal for use in the field, and a Planning Book for recording information and developing a range management plan for the operation.

Topics covered in the course include range mapping, plant identification, ecology, sampling, forage production, stocking rate, range condition and improvement, livestock distribution, grazing systems and monitoring.

"By the time producers finish the course, they will be able to measure and evaluate the grazing potential of their native forested pasture," explains Donna Lawrence, range management specialist with Public Lands, Alberta Agriculture, Barrhead. "They will also be able to balance grazing animals with the available forage supply, as the course includes instruction on how to control livestock distribution and use range improvement to enhance grazing."

Once a producer has completed a range management plan, the plan can be submitted to a range specialist for evaluation and feedback. A certificate of completion is then issued. The producer can also request a farm visit from a local range professional.

Northern Range Plants, a plant identification guide, can be purchased separately. The book has over 150 line drawings and over 300 photographs of some of the most common northern range plants and hints on how to identify them. The book also includes comments on forage value and habitat. Forage plants include shrubs, forbs and grasses; however, not all plants are palatable or of high forage value for cattle. This books will help producers determine useable forage.

Grazing Management of Northern Rangelands costs $65 plus GST per course and includes the plant identification book, ***Northern Range Plants***. The plant identification book can be purchased separately for $25 plus GST per book. For orders from outside Alberta, there is an additional $2 plus GST for shipping and handling.

For more information or to purchase the course, contact Alberta Agriculture's Home Study Program at (780) 427-2171, fax (780) 422-7755, order line (780) 427-1404. The home study website is at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/homestudy**>.

Contact: *Faye Douglas Phillips*
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4-H program puts horse-sense to the test

There's a whole lot more to horses than riding, and close to 130 young Albertans will be putting their equine expertise to the test during the 4-H Horse Classic program in early August. As well as having a lot of fun, the top four finishers at the event will earn the right to attend a major horse competition in Denver early next year.

The program, set to run August 2 to 4, 2000 at Olds College, gives 4-H'ers the chance to showcase their knowledge of horse husbandry, handling, judging and biology. It is also an opportunity to improve these skills by talking to other delegates and to experts taking part in the program.

"All of the activities at Horse Classic further the delegates' knowledge about the equine industry," explains Lee Carothers, a 4-H leader and one of the organizers of this year's program. "We hope to keep members interested in the equine industry by informing them about an area they had not thought about before. We also feel that the more knowledge people have about horses, the more likely they are to enjoy the experience of horse ownership."

Sponsored by Lammle's Western Wear, UFA, Burwash Brand Horse Gear, SSG Gloves and Gas Alberta Inc., Horse Classic offers a range of activities that test delegates' horse sense. This is done through events such as the Horse Bowl, a *Reach For the Top*-style competition focused on horse husbandry; team problems, which require delegates to work together to solve horse-related problems and present them to a group; and slide, quiz and ID stations that test delegates on all aspects of the horse industry, with questions ranging from physiology and health to markings and equipment.

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Delegates' skills in judging horses will be put to the test, as will their oral and written communication skills, when they give illustrated talks and demonstrations on a variety of topics, such as safety and horse care. Participants will also get a practice-run in marketing horses and equipment by designing a one-page advertisement and dealing face-to-face with prospective buyers. Finally, delegates take part in a series of clinics, covering topics such as heavy horse driving and emergency care. When the work is done, delegates have time to relax, catch up with friends and meet new people at a pizza party and dance.

Delegates will be scored on their performance at each event in the program and the top four finishers aged 16 and older will fly to Denver, Colorado, in January, 2001 to take part in the Western Round-Up Horse Competition. "It's the trip of a lifetime, according to former winners, and is the reward for doing well at the program," Carothers says of the Denver trip. "Because Alberta is the only province to send a team, these delegates have the honour of representing their country at an international competition with 4-H members from several U.S. states. It's also an opportunity for them to have fun and make friends.

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H Website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

Contact: *Charles Schoening*
4-H project event coordinator
(780) 427-4462

CowProfit$

CowProfit$ is the latest software package produced by the Industry Development Sector and Home Study Program of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

The program was designed to help cattle producers calculate the cost per pound of calf produced as well as per cow wintered. Producers can use these indicators to make management decisions by determining profitability levels, defining trends and comparing individual data against group averages. The program analyzes the economic and financial performance of a cow-calf operation starting with *whole-farm* numbers from a producer's accounting system record book or tax return and allocates amounts to cow-calf and other enterprises.

"*CowProfit$* will help you gain financial control of your farm business. You will be able to make management decisions by determining profitability level, defining trends and comparting individual data against group averages," claims Ted Darling, farm management specialist with Alberta Agriculture.

The *CowProfit$* software has many features that make it appealing to cow-calf operators. There are up to five different enterprises in each of Cow Calf, Forage, Feeder, Pasture, Straw and Other. The program includes enterprise interactions such as the forage enterprise transferring feed to the cow-calf enterprise. The whole-farm numbers are allocated to these specific enterprises. Analysis is based on cash revenues and expenses with adjustments for inventory and accounts payable and receivable. Enterprise reports show costs and returns on a "per unit of production" basis and there is an export function to spreadsheets as well as other formats.

"With this program, you can calculate cost per pound of calf produced and cost per pound of gain for feeders," says Jeff Millang, beef specialist, cow/calf, Alberta Agriculture, Olds. "It can calculate an operation's costs and returns profile for the enterprises. In addition, you can create standardized reports that can be compared to provincial research data and benchmarks."

Cow-calf operators are also able to use the program to produce their own benchmark data for better budgeting and planning. They can use the *Winners & Losers* report to identify profitable enterprises.

CowProfit$ software package includes a detailed manual and extensive on-line help files to make the program easy to use. Help using the program is also available from farm management specialists and beef or feedlot specialists across the province.

The program costs $150 plus GST. For orders from outside Alberta, there is an additional $2 plus GST for handling.

In order to use the software, you will need an IBM PC or compatible with a Pentium processor, Windows 95/98 with 12 meg of RAM and SVGA graphics adaptor or better with a 800 X 600 screen resolution.

For more information or to purchase the program, contact the Home Study Program at (780) 427-2171, Fax (780) 422-7755, order line (780) 427-2404. The home study website is at **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/homestudy>**.

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Agri-News Briefs

Managing manure

When properly managed, manure is a valuable resource contributing to a sustainable livestock and crop industry. In fact, one of the basic cornerstones of environmental sustainablilty is the use of manure and liquid nutrients on crop land. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has a new video that can help. ***Manure and Riparian Management in the 21st Century*** features interview segments with Alberta producers who have had success in manure management. They discuss developing a sustainable manure management plan, how to monitor soil nutrient levels, assessing run-off risk, and more. Find out how you can help ensure environmental sustainability for future generations. This video is available for loan or purchase from Alberta Agriculture's multi-media library in Edmonton at (780) 422-3951, or by contacting the nearest Alberta Agriculture rural advisory services district office.

Banff pork seminar

The Banff Pork Seminar 2001 is being held on January 23 to 26, 2001 at the Banff Centre for Conferences. This year's topics include: Positioning pork in the global food industry; Will greenhouse gases constrain the pork industry?; Will we use genetically modified products in the pork industry?; and, Assuring pork safety. The seminar features speakers of international calibre who are recognized authorities in their field. The seminar is designed for participants interested in improving their knowledge and decision-making abilities in pork production. Commercial pork producers, researchers, agribusiness service and supply representatives, extension and education specialists, veterinarians and anyone interested in the latest information in pork production and technology are invited to attend. Registration information will be available in October. To receive a brochure, contact the Banff Pork Seminar, c/o Department of Agricultural, Food & Nutritional Science, 4-10 Agriculture - Forestry Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2P5. Registration can also be submitted on-line from the BPS website at <**www.afns.ualberta.ca/bps**>. For further information, phone (780) 492-3236, fax (780) 492-9130 or e-mail <**bps@afns.ualberta.ca**>.

New crops agronomist appointed at Beaverlodge Research Farm

Dr. Rachid El Hafid is the new crops agronomist at the Beaverlodge Research Farm. He will lead the special crops program at Beaverlodge, with responsibility to conduct research and transfer technologies for a wide array of new crops. This new initiative is indicative of the collaboration and partnership between Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Alberta Agriculture to ensure that the Peace region has a strong research framework to develop new technologies for the entire zone. Prior to his work in forage agronomy at the U of A, El Hafid served as professor of field and horticultural crop production in Ecuador and as a research scientist with the Dryland Agriculture Research Centre in Morocco. He will work on evaluation of new crops and development of agronomic strategies in pulse, spice, medicinal, fibre and other potential new crops. This appointment will build a strong provincial research capability within the New Crop Development Unit of Alberta Agriculture. The entire initiative is identified as the Crop Diversification Centre Peace (CDC Peace) to complement and collaborate with the special crops research programs at CDC North (Edmonton) and CDC South (Brooks). For further information, contact Dr. El Hafid at (780) 354-5129, fax (780) 354-8171 or Dr. Stan Blade, Leader, New Crop Development Unit (CDCN) (780) 415-2311.

Agri-News

August 7, 2000

Nitrates accumulate in drought stressed crops

If planning to graze or bale a drought stressed cereal crop for greenfeed, test it for nitrates first. There have been reports of several cereal crops developing high levels of nitrates under drought conditions this summer.

"Excess nitrates accumulate in plants whenever they are stressed due to hot dry winds, drought, cool cloudy weather, hail or frost," says Dr. Bjorn Berg, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lethbridge. "When under stress, the roots continue to take up nitrogen in the form of nitrate, however, due to impaired photosynthesis the nitrate is not converted to protein and accumulates in the stems and leaves. Nitrate accumulation is highest about three days after a hail storm or frost. Hail or frost damaged crops should be cut right away, to prevent nitrate accumulation, or after seven to ten days to allow accumulated nitrate to be converted to plant protein if the plants recover, or to be leached out if they die."

Annual forage crops tend to accumulate greater amounts of nitrates than perennial forages as they are often planted into well fertilized, manured or recently ploughed pasture. Annual crops are usually harvested at the milk to soft dough stage when nitrate contents are high.

"In ruminant animals such as cattle, nitrate is converted to the more toxic nitrite by bacteria in the rumen," adds Patrick Ramsey, PAg, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, High River. "The nitrite is then changed to ammonia, which is absorbed by the blood and passed in the urine as urea. Nitrate poisoning occurs when the nitrite level in the rumen exceeds the capacity of the microbes to convert it to ammonia. When this happens, nitrate and nitrite are absorbed through the rumen wall into the bloodstream. Nitrites change blood hemoglobin to methemoglobin which won't release oxygen to body cells, and the animal begins to suffocate."

Individual animals have different levels of tolerance to nitrites as evidenced by the variability in the onset of production or reproductive problems or death. Animals in good condition, receiving adequate nutrition are able to convert nitrate to nitrite and finally to ammonia more efficiently than animals in poor condition.

Chronic nitrate poisoning generally occurs when nitrate (NO3) levels are 0.5 to 1.0 per cent of the feed consumed (dry matter basis). Production problems such as reduced weight gain,

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AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

lower milk yield, depressed appetite, and greater susceptibility to infection often go unnoticed. Reproductive problems such as abortion within the first 100 days of pregnancy, premature calves that die within 18-24 hours of birth, and newborn calves that survive and have convulsions or seizures can occur, but are usually not recognized as being feed related.

In acute poisoning animals can die within a few hours of initial ingestion of a high nitrate feed having over 1.0 per cent nitrate. Signs of acute poisoning include: increased heart rate, muscle tremors, vomiting, weakness, blue-grey mucous membranes, excess saliva and tear production, depression, laboured or violent breathing, staggered gait, frequent urination, low body temperature, disorientation and inability to get up.

"For safety sake feed test forages, especially greenfeed, for nitrates," says Berg. "High nitrate feeds should be fed in combination with low nitrate feeds in order to reduce the total nitrate level in the diet to below 0.5 per cent. For example if your greenfeed tested 1.5 per cent nitrate, it should only be fed at about one third of the total diet."

"Introduce animals to a high nitrate feed slowly after they have been well fed," says Ramsey. "Rumen microbes are able to adapt to higher nitrate levels in the feed over three to five days and make the nitrate conversion cycle into nitrite and ammonia three to five times more efficient. If animals are abruptly switched from a low nitrate level to a higher level, a build up of nitrates can be expected before the microbes become adapted."

Feeding rations in two or three meals per day rather than one will reduce the amount of nitrite released from the feed at one time. Nitrate poisoning may be reduced by feeding high levels of high energy feeds such as grains and molasses and vitamin A. A source of carbohydrate slows down the build up of nitrites in the rumen so cows fed grain are less susceptible than those fed roughage alone. Since fertility is not a concern in feeder cattle, consider feeding high nitrate forages in combination with other forages and grain to feeder cattle instead of pregnant cows.

If you suspect nitrate poisoning contact your veterinarian. A solution of methylene blue given intravenously aids in the conversion of methemoglobin to hemoglobin and helps prevent oxygen deprivation. When requesting feed analysis check for nitrates but also test for crude protein, calcium, phosphorous, and acid detergent fibre, which is used to estimate the energy content. This way a beef specialist or cattle nutritionist can help you balance the rations for your cattle to optimize the use of your feeds while getting the performance you want.

Contact:	*Dr. Bjorn Berg*	*Patrick Ramsey*
	(403) 381-5835	*(403) 652-8303*

Green Certificate made official

Responding to industry and producer recommendations for early training of students in agriculture studies, the Green Certificate Program has been given ministerial approval as a program of studies by Alberta Learning. This means a series of agricultural credit courses for high school students based on Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Green Certificate are now a full-fledged program of studies available to all Alberta high schools.

In making the announcement, Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Alberta Learning, and Ty Lund, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, described the Green Certificate as an optional program consisting of 21 courses in seven primary agriculture specializations.

"When we piloted the program, teachers, students and parents expressed exceptionally strong support," says Oberg. "Overwhelmingly, we heard that this program is good, as it increases the opportunities for young Albertans to prepare for successful careers in agriculture."

All Alberta high schools have access to the program of studies for each set of Green Certificate courses: beef feedlot production, cow-calf production, crop production, dairy production, irrigated crop production, sheep production and swine production. Students who qualify for a Green Certificate Level 1 (a certified competent farm production technician) will have completed three required courses and will also receive 16 high school credits.

"The program is a good example of innovation and teamwork between departments and more importantly for young Albertans," says Lund. "Students learn on the job, under the direction of experienced farm personnel and under the administration of Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Learning and local schools. It will build closer links among the school, the student and the local community. Our agriculture industry needs a well-educated and trained workforce and if we are to meet the challenges and opportunities that lay before us, the Green Certificate Program will help our industry move forward."

Contact: *Doug Taylor*
Supervisor, Green Certificate Program,
Agriculture Food and Rural Development
(780) 427-2171 / 427-4183

For toll-free calling outside of Edmonton, dial 310-0000 first.

ADM appointed for industry development sector

The Industry Development Sector of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has a new assistant deputy minister. Brian Rhiness, acting in the job since December 1999, was appointed to the permanent position on May 23, 2000.

"Brian has considerable experience in working with industry," says Jim Nichols, Deputy Minister of Alberta Agriculture. "That experience and his enthusiasm will be valuable to the important work this sector does. We are really pleased to have him as part of this team."

Rhiness has worked with Alberta Agriculture since 1983. He began his government career as a provincial dairy specialist, then worked in projects and policy with the Agriculture Products Marketing Council. He became general manager of the Council in 1995.

The Industry Development Sector is responsible for the delivery of programs and services to Alberta's agri-food industry. The sector includes delivery of field services and value-added and growth initiatives.

Rhiness is currently leading a sector review, focusing on how to more effectively deliver programs and services and to meet the department's goals and the needs of producers and processors.

"This is an exciting challenge and opportunity," Rhiness says. "I am really looking forward to assisting industry in taking advantage of the great opportunities out there and to work with the talented people that make up this sector. I want to follow-up on our theme of building on excellence."

Contact: Brian Rhiness
(780) 427-2442

June cool with near to below normal precipitation

Alberta had near to below normal temperatures and below normal precipitation during the month of June. The provincial average precipitation of 64.4 mm was 9.7 mm below the 1961 to 1990 average of 74.1 mm.

"Frost was reported across the province early in June, but by the end of the first week, temperatures recovered to above normal levels," says Shane Chetner, acting agricultural air issues specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "Temperatures dropped to below normal during the second week of June in the northwestern, northeastern, and Peace regions, while the central and southern regions reported near normal temperatures. Near normal temperatures were reported across the province during the third week and above normal temperatures were reported towards the end of June."

The provincial average temperature was 1.2 degrees below the 1961 to 1990 average of 14.5 degrees C. All regions reported near to below normal temperatures.

Rocky Mountain House reported the greatest temperature departure, 3.3 degree below average June monthly mean temperature of 13.1 degree Celsius.

"Growing degree day totals from April 1 to July 9 were near normal in the southern region and about two to three weeks behind in all other regions," adds Chetner. "This suggests a late harvest with potential concerns about frost problems. Growing degree day totals are used for comparing the progress of a growing season to the long-term average and are useful for estimating crop development stages and maturing dates."

The southern, eastern third of the central, and north eastern regions reported below normal precipitation. The western two thirds of the central and north western regions received near normal precipitation. Most of the Peace region reported above to much above normal precipitation. The northern area of the Peace region reported much below normal precipitation.

"High Level, located in the northern Peace region, reported the greatest precipitation departure with 13.2 mm, 20 per cent of normal," says Chetner. "On the wet side, Peace River Airport reported 110.5 mm of precipitation in June, 175 percent of it's long term average."

Several regions reported isolated and some larger area hail damage in the last week of June.

The provincial averages are based on data recorded at 65 Environment Canada climate stations across Alberta.

For more information, contact Chetner at (780) 427-3615, or visit the Alberta Agriculture web page <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca**> and go to the weather section.

Contact: Shane Chetner
(780) 427-3615

Bringing the UN to western Alberta

Nordegg may be a long way from the United Nations building in New York, but for one week next month, two 4-H'ers will join close to 100 young Albertans near this western Alberta town for a first-hand look at the UN's role in international relations.

Thanks to sponsorship from the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede, Adelle Peterson of Morrin and Kira Sallis of Sexsmith will take part in the seminar on the United Nations and International Affairs, at the Goldeye Centre near Nordegg from August 13 to 18, 2000. With sessions led by diplomats from the United Nations and Canadian Foreign Affairs and

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International Trade, participants will have the chance to explore the political, economic and social dynamics of international affairs.

Seventeen-year-old Sallis, a member of the Kleskun 4-H Multi-club, couldn't think of a better way to spend her summer holidays, even if this program bears a striking resemblance to a social studies class. "I'm really interested in international relations and how the world works," she says. "I hope to gather more information on how to pursue a career in international relations while I'm there."

Sallis visited Japan for two months on a 4-H exchange last year, which piqued her interest in travel and got her thinking about a career that would allow her to visit countries all over the world. "I definitely want to do more travelling in the future," she adds.

Peterson, also 17 and a member of both the Trochu Valley Riders and the Morrin 4-H Multi-clubs, says the program will be different from most others that 4-H members attend during the summer as it doesn't have an agricultural focus, and won't have many 4-H'ers involved. But, that certainly hasn't dampened her enthusiasm. "It'll be different, but I like meeting people, so I'm excited about going." As the winner of this year's Premier's Award, one of the highest honours bestowed on Alberta 4-H members, Peterson will take part in a variety of activities this summer. She was glad to find that the Seminar on the United Nations and International Affairs fit into her schedule. "I like to be up on current events, so this should be interesting."

Both 4-H members were chosen to take part in the seminar after attending the 4-H Selections program, held April 28 to May 1, 2000 at Olds College. Through Selections, about 80 of the province's top 4-H members are chosen to take part in a variety of educational trips and exchanges, ranging from a citizenship seminar in Ottawa and National 4-H member's conference in Washington DC, to interprovincial exchanges and a 4-H conference in California.

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at < **www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h** >.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
Provincial 4-H Programs Specialist
(403) 498-8510

Skill-building and fun for future counsellors

The weather didn't cooperate, but for close to 90 4-H members the enthusiasm and energy at the first 4-H camp of the season kept the summertime blues at bay.

The ***Leadership Through Counseling Seminar*** (LTCS), held June 29 to July 3, 2000 at the Alberta 4-H Centre, on Battle Lake near Westerose, taught 4-H members aged 15 to 21 what it takes to run a successful summer camp. And one of the main ingredients is enthusiasm, said Amy Bozyk of Nanton.

"The counsellors were enthusiastic, and they showed me how much of a difference that could make," explains Bozyk, a member of the Stavely Stampeders 4-H club. "With the LTCS counsellors always staying up-beat and energetic, delegates were able to enjoy themselves while learning new skills. Since most of the participants at LTCS will go on to assist in the running of other 4-H camps later this summer, this lesson in enthusiasm was the most important one to learn.

"I feel that I learned the things I expected to learn, but all of it was planted in my head while I did fun stuff. I know how I've enjoyed 4-H camps, and would like to use what I learned at LTCS to give that kind of experience back to other campers."

Sponsored by Peavey Mart, Agricore, Wetaskiwin Co-op and Agrium, LTCS gave participants hands-on training in first aid, archery, canoeing, dancing, crafts, dealing with bullying and organizing camp games. There were a few rainy evenings, so the delegates at LTCS put together some in-door activities, such as a dance and talent show, that got everybody involved and active. This was another important lesson for them, since group activities are an effective way to help young campers beat homesickness. Holly Homes of Tiger Lily knows this from experience.

"When I younger and first went to camp, I was scared because I didn't know anybody," says Holmes. "But, thanks to some encouragement from counsellors, I quickly overcame my initial reluctance. You have to get young campers involved and invite them into group activities and pair them up with people they don't know. It's better that way, because it gets them involved and meeting new people."

Kent Elias, a 17-year-old member of the Rosebrier 4-H Beef Club near Wetaskiwin, adds that the friendliness and acceptance everyone felt at LTCS showed them the kind of atmosphere participants will try to foster at future camps. "It was one of the best camps I've ever been to. Everybody was so mature, there were no cliques and everybody was really open to all suggestions."

Having learned the skills needed to help run a successful camp, these 4-H'ers will help staff members with programs at Camp Mackinicholea near Westlock, the Alberta 4-H Centre

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west of Wetaskiwin, Moose Lake in the Bonnyville area, Camp Artiban near Peace River, and Elkwater Camp near Medicine Hat. Volunteer counsellors will also use their skills at 4-H provincial programs, such as Club Week, which will be held at Olds College and the People Developing People camps, held at Battle Lake. 4-H programs are open to anyone aged 9 to 20, begin in early July and continue almost non-stop until the last week of August.

For more information on joining 4-H call 422-4H4H (toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first), or visit the 4-H website at < **www.agric.gov.ab.ca** >.

Contact: Marguerite Stark
Provincial 4-H Programs Specialist
(403) 948-8510

Conference addressed conflict resolution

Delegates at the Manure Management 2000 Conference, held June 26-28, 2000 at the Coast Plaza Hotel in Calgary, dealt with a growing issue that impacts livestock operations today more than ever – conflict resolution. The industry is undergoing change and change often brings conflict.

With the current move to larger, more intensive livestock operations, the public has new questions about the sustainability, environmental effects and social responsibility of these operations.

Conference organizers realized that questions arise in the community when intensive livestock operations are proposed and this creates conflict for the owners and operators of these operations. An expert was brought in to provide advice and to help producers deal with conflict.

"We asked Barb McNeil, chartered mediator and conflict specialist, to help create awareness and a little understanding that there are many issues that lead to conflict and that producers need to understand the other side of the story," says Darcy Fitzgerald of the conference organizing committee, Edmonton.

McNeil, of B.M. McNeil and Associates, spent half a morning working with about 400 delegates on a process for achieving agreement with win-win outcomes. She outlined the seven main concerns of people facing any type of major development: health, safety, environmental impact, cultural issues, aesthetic issues, public policy and legal regulations. McNeil pointed out that these are the main triggers of conflict and she refers to them as the interests that underlie most conflict.

"Interests for me are the key to conflict resolution," she says and explains that when you get to the interests level you often find common and compatible interests for the parties involved.

She said finding common interests lead to a win-win outcomes even if the parties begin far apart in their positions. According to McNeil, a position is one party's ideal solution to resolve the matter in dispute.

"Positions are unilateral and expressed in forceful and demanding ways," she says. "When people get dug into their position they assume a win-lose outcome and attach a lot of responsibility and blame on the other party. Communication offers the only way to resolve these conflicts and both parties must learn to listen.

"We must listen deeply and communicate our interests. Conflict can lead to positive change and gets the information out on the table."

In her role as mediator, McNeil often sees positive relationships develop between opposing parties as they gain understanding of each other and recognize they have common interests. Although she acknowledges that conflict is often a stressful and unpleasant experience, she insists it needn't be.

"We don't need to be tough on people to get issues resolved. I like to be tough on the problem and easy on the people." McNeil says. "People today want to have a say in matters that affect them and are commonly more politically and culturally astute."

Too often, development proposals contain all the technical information but don't include a communications plan to inform the surrounding community and address all the possible issues arising from the development. This is often the most common reason discussion breaks down and disagreements occur. Steven Covey's statement, "seek first to understand – then to be understood," is an effective conflict resolution tool. McNeil contends that any conflict can reach a win-win outcome if the lines of communication remain open and strong.

Contact: Darcy Fitzgerald, Chair
Manure Management 2000 Conference
(780) 422-2522

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Agri-News Briefs

New beef program coordinator

Brad Fournier has joined the beef, dairy and sheep branch of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's animal industry division. In his two-year secondment as beef program coordinator, Fournier will be coordinating beef program development and delivery with the department staff, product teams and industry. He will keep current information databases used to address industry and government opportunities and issues. Fournier will also be getting involved with incoming trade missions seeking information on our industries and business opportunities. He will be joining special project teams such as the Cowship$ Windows Update Team and participating in department support of the Quality Starts Here program. Fournier is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan in Animal Science and recently completed an M.Sc. degree in animal genetics. He is currently co-chair of the Alberta Agriculture Beef Product Team. For more information, contact Fournier at (780) 427- 4544, fax (780) 427-1057, or e-mail <**brad.fournier@gov.ab.ca**>.

Ag stats yearbook on-line

The Agriculture Statistics Yearbook has been posted to the Alberta Agriculture website. It can be visited at <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/yearbook/index.html>. The yearbook is in downloadable PDF format. A leading source of fundamental agri-food statistics for the province of Alberta, the Yearbook is compiled by the Statistics and Data Development Unit of the Department of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Dynamic trends occurring in the primary agricultural industry and the expanding food and beverage processing sector are presented in the Yearbook's 105 statistical tables. The sections of the Yearbook (farm income and expenses, economic indicators, food and beverages, agri-food exports, livestock, crops and Census of Agriculture) provide detailed data for Alberta and are supplemented with comparable data for the other provinces and Canada. The Yearbook features topics of major significance and importance to the agri-food sector including farm cash receipts, net farm income, input costs, population, gross domestic product, employment, investment expenditures, food expenditures, food and beverage processing activity measures, commodity prices, exports of primary commodities and value added processed products, production and inventory of livestock and crop estimates (production and acreage). Data presented in the yearbook are current as of February 2000. For further information, contact Gail Atkinson, divisional internet administrator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton, (780) 422-4175.

Agri-News

August 14, 2000

Food Fest 2000

What do a Saskatoon syrup processor from Rycroft, a Dawson Creek manufacturer of sheep wool products and a restauranteur from Grande Prairie all have in common? They, and other Peace processors of unique food and giftware items, have the opportunity to participate in Food Fest 2000, a major trade show and food service competition coming to Grande Prairie during Small Business Week, October 23 - 29, 2000.

"Food Fest 2000 is a program of the Peace Value Added Food and Ag Association," says Anita Schreyer, herb director, Sexsmith. "The event is supported by a number of Peace sponsors including the Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board, Grande Prairie District Chamber of Commerce, Peace Region Economic Development Alliance, Alberta Chefs' Association, Alberta Economic Development and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development."

Food Fest 2000 is a chance to showcase small and specialized businesses to retailers, industry buyers, the food service industry, and the general public. It offers an opportunity to explore and expand new regional markets for products.

The trade show can accommodate up to 50 booths to highlight all aspects of the Peace value added industry from local restaurants to unique giftware, food items, fine arts creations and specialty products. The Food Fest 2000 trade show will be open on October 29 at Grande Prairie's Crystal Centre.

"This adjudicated, professional trade show offers significant returns for the investment," says Schreyer. "It includes the opportunity to participate in a series of educational workshops, as well as offering the chance to expand markets, network with potential buyers and industry partners, increase consumer awareness of products, increase sales and promote products in a first class setting. Sampling of food products is encouraged. In fact, the show's door fee will entitle each attendee to free tokens that may be exchanged for food samples at participating booths."

"For restaurants and product manufacturers, sponsoring a booth in the trade show is the way to go," adds Schreyer. "Chefs, food service personnel, celebrities and students will find their niche in the Culinary Challenge, a 'black box' cook-off competition."

The cook off competition has expanded and is back by popular demand. The Food Fest 2000 Culinary Challenge features three competition categories: student, professional and celebrity over two days. Up to 12 student teams, each made up of four people currently enrolled in an accredited food service

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Internet site: www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agrinews Editor e-mail: agrinews@agric.gov.ab.ca

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

program or high school course, will showcase their skills October 27 in the time limited, black box format competition featuring Peace Country food products. On October 29, a maximum of 12 additional teams consisting of industry professionals and local celebrities will compete under the same rules. The menu creations will be judged by a panel of chefs, media and Peace Value Added Food and Ag Association members. Show plates will be displayed at the Food Fest 2000 trade show.

Other aspects of Food Fest 2000 include an awards presentation and educational workshops.

"We are anticipating that many Peace region entrepreneurs will take the challenge and sponsor a booth in the Food Fest 2000 trade show and showcase their products," says Schreyer. "We invite all chefs to enter a team in the Culinary Challenge and let their innovation and creativity shine. This is also a great opportunity to look into becoming a member of the Peace Value Added Food and Ag Association and help build the area's agrifood processing industry."

Space is limited and in past years the show was allocated well before the September 15 registration deadline. To ensure a place, call Schreyer at (403) 568-2915 for an exhibitor application package. Registrations will be accepted on a first come first served basis following completion of application requirements. Support Small Business Week in Alberta – participate in Food Fest 2000 and show the world what the Peace Region has to offer.

Contact: Anita Schreyer
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Employers' handbook for agriculture and horticulture

A new addition has been added to the Alberta Agriculture diversification library in Westlock, *The Employers' Handbook for Agriculture and Horticulture*. This book is written as a guide to owners, managers and supervisors in agricultural and horticultural operations. The handbook will help the reader: recruit better employees; supervise; motivate/train employees to reach desired performance; and discipline/ dismiss employees should that be required.

"The handbook is divided into five sections," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist-business with Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development, Westlock. "The first section deals with *human resources, planning and regulations*. It describes the human resource planning process, a process which helps you decide how many and what type of employees you require. It also advises on employer regulations."

Section two deals with *hiring*. It outlines the process to follow when hiring an employee. There are 10 steps in the hiring process: know your objectives; job description; recruitment; interviewing; testing checking references; making the selection; offering the job; employment understanding; and orientation.

Section three deals with *supervising*. Supervising is one of the key elements in a good employee-employer relationship. Employees are available to fill most employment situations. Recruitment is the key to finding them. Good employee – employer relations is the key to keeping them.

Section four deals with *training, motivating and evaluating*. It discusses several ways in which managers can promote high level performance from workers: developing worker ability through training; creating a motivational climate in the workplace; paying fair wages and offering valued benefits.

The last section deals with *communications, problem solving and discipline*. Good communications can avoid many problems, but when conflict or the need to discipline does arise, you must deal with it. Also discussed is how to approach that dreaded task of dismissing an employee. Conflict and problems are a normal part of managing employees. You probably can't avoid problems, but you can manage them.

Resources kept and maintained by Alberta Agriculture's rural development specialists - business are available to Albertans. Contact the nearest rural development specialists – business:

Kerry Engel	Westlock	(780) 349-4465
Lori-Jo Graham	Claresholm	(403) 625-1445
Lisa Houle	Hanna	(403) 854-5500
Sharon Homeniuk	Stony Plain	(780) 963-6101
Tim Keating	Falher	(780) 837-2211
Slav Heller	St. Paul	(780) 645-6301
Donna Fleury	Airdrie	(403) 948-8537
Janice McGregor	Morinville	(780) 939-4351
Leona Reynolds-Zayak	Vermilion	(780) 853-8101
Linda Hawk	Medicine Hat	(403) 529-3616
Lynn Stegman	Lacombe	(403) 782-3301
Jan Warren	Vulcan	(780) 485-2236
Marian Williams	Camrose	(780) 679-1210

Contact: Kerry Engel
(780) 349-4465

Agriculture website – 5 years on-line

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development celebrated another milestone in early June. It was 20 'internet years' since it made its first foray into the internet world.

"Twenty internet years is actually only five calendar years," says Ron Weisenburger, co-chair of the department's *Ropin' the Web* internet project, Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton. "Twenty web-years ago, Alberta Agriculture first got into the internet business. It was in June, 1995 that the department enlisted 75 Alberta farmers to test out the internet as a means to access information electronically in a pilot project called *Project Barley*. The pilot lasted three months and the results and evaluations were very positive. Then Minister Walter Paszkowski and then Deputy Minister Doug Radke agreed with the farmer endorsements, and endorsed launching the Alberta Agriculture site and using the internet to deliver department information and services as quickly as possible."

"In the early part of 1996, the Alberta Agriculture website was born. It is one of the greatest agriculture internet sites in the world," says co-chair Darwin Daviduk, with Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton. "It has grown over the years and matured and is now one of the oldest agriculture internet sites in the world, too. The site is being used more and more. It is expected that there will be as many as 1.7 million 'user sessions' in 2000. It is estimated that approximately 20,000 Alberta farmers will make a total of 500,000 visits to the site this year."

Farmers, processors and others use the site to find the information when they need it. If they cannot find what they are looking for, or if they have follow-up questions, they can contact department specialists.

Today, the site consists of 30,000 pages of information, 5,500 images, and 500 megs of data. It is also connected to over 2,000 different websites around the world and more than 2,400 different websites from around the world are connected to the site. The site is rich withalmost any type of information that Alberta farmers need. It covers virtually everything from alpaca to zucchini. It also provides users with more than 20 different calculators; three different selector systems to get advice on how to control weeds, pests and fungi; an *Ask the Expert* system that helps users find and e-mail the right department expert for their problem.

The department is currently reviewing ways of improving the site, continuing to provide on-line support to Alberta's industry, so the agriculture industry of Alberta can maintain its leadership position in the world of agriculture, food and rural development. This includes implementing ways to allow people to personalize and customize their view of Alberta Agriculture's site to best suit their individual needs by providing for on-line completion of many of the department's forms, and by making it possible to users to pay for department fees and products on-line

"By the way, the term web-year was coined a few years ago," says Weisenburger. "A web year is three months – recognition of the rapid rate of change in web technologies."

Alberta Agriculture's website address is **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca>**.

Contact: *Ron Weisenburger* *(780) 422-1821*

Darwin Daviduk *(780) 422-6722*

4-H'ers overcome obstacles in leadership course

When four Alberta 4-H delegates went to the Summer Youth Leadership Camp near Hinton from July 3 to 8, 2000, they found that learning to be better leaders often involves overcoming some imposing obstacles. In their case, one of those obstacles was 12 feet high.

"We did a session on teamwork that morning, and later, there was a 12 foot high wall that we had to get everyone over," explains 17-year-old Michael Fontaine of St. Paul. Fontaine, a member of the St. Paul 4-H Multi-club, says these sorts of challenges gave the approximately 30 participants at the camp the chance to put different skills to the test. Although the skills they studied, ranging from teamwork and public speaking to communication and conflict resolution, were first brought up in a classroom setting each morning, it was the hands-on, outdoor practice that crystalized them for the delegates.

"It was very well organized. There were lots of enrichment activities, like rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking and a good long hike," adds Fontaine. "It was a better way to learn than just being indoors."

The 4-H delegates, who were sponsored by AEC Pipelines Ltd., took part in the camp to build on the leadership training they have already received through their clubs. Seventeen-year-old Julie Ulseth of Veteran, a member of the Consort Creative Hands 4-H Multi-club, agrees that the outdoor activities were an effective way to illustrate the need for a variety of skills in order to be effective leaders. "After you take the course, the skills are there. Once I come across a situation that requires them, I'll be able to use them without even realizing it," she says.

Ulseth adds that about half of the camp's participants were Australians who had never heard of 4-H. With such a diversity of people, all of whom had studied leadership skills through a variety of programs, participants were able to learn from each other. "You learned a lot about different organizations," she says. "This way we learned skills that pertain more to leadership in general, rather just to a 4-H setting."

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Two other Alberta 4-H members attended the program, 17-year-old Georgina Lieverse of Beaverlodge, who is part of the Beaverlodge 4-H Beef club, and Cari-Ann Viney of Didsbury, an 18-year-old member of the Didsbury Outlaws 4-H Horse Club. The 4-H participants were chosen to take part in the Summer Youth Leadership Camp after attending the Alberta 4-H Selections program, held April 28 to May 1, 2000 at Olds College. Each year, about 60 delegates from the Selections program are chosen to attend various educational and skill-building tours and trips, ranging from interprovincial exchanges to participating in 4-H conferences in Montana and California.

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at **<www.agric.ab.gov.ca/4h>**.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
Provincial 4-H Programs Specialist
(403) 948-8510

4-H members show heavy horse projects

Draft horses may not be a mainstay in farm work anymore, but they're still well-liked by many, and this summer, 24 young Albertans had a chance to show their skills at handling these big animals.

The 4-H Heavy Horse Achievement Day, ran August 10 from 9 a.m. till about 3:30 p.m. at the Olds Fair Grounds, brought together 4-H draft horse project members from across the province in their largest show to date. "This year is the biggest enrolment we've ever had," says Kathy Baker, Achievement Day assistant co-ordinator. "There were 24 people registered, from as far north as Westlock down to Hillspring and Twin Butte, near the Montana border. Participants showed draft horses ranging in age from one to three years."

When they join the 4-H heavy horse program, members start with a yearling colt, and learn how to halter break the animal and decorate its mane and tail. They also study conformation, hoof care and harness parts. In the following year, 4-H'ers are taught how to ground drive their horses, which involves walking behind the animal as they lead it through a pattern; in addition, they learn to decorate their horses under timed conditions. When the horses reach their third year, delegates are taught how to drive them from two-wheeled carts. All these skills are demonstrated and judged at the Heavy Horse Achievement Day. Furthermore, this was the first year that delegates partnered their horse with another draft horse and drive them as a team.

Supported by the Wildrose Draft Horse Association, the Heavy Horse Achievement Day gave participants lots of challenges, but also a fun day for them, as they got to meet with friends from all over the province. "I think we have a unique bunch. They really enjoy it," says Baker. "Draft horse kids have a really close fellowship. They always share equipment and help each other out."

Although some of the participants were as young as 12, they generally didn't seem intimidated by the size of their animals. Before they begin working with draft horses, participants all have to take the 4-H horsemanship program, giving them experience with saddle horses. They also attend at least two heavy horse workshops per year, where experienced handlers teach them new techniques for members to practice with their animals at home. "They're really happy to have that one-on-one training. They gain a lot of confidence when they see that they can get their horses to do what they want them to," adds Barker.

The 4-H Heavy Horse Achievement Day was open to the public and free of charge. Baker says members are always delighted to see other people taking an interest in their projects. "They've worked hard, and they like to show their horses," she says. "All these kids are eager to talk about them."

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first), or visit the 4-H website at< **www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h** >.

Contact: *Kathy Baker*
Assistant Co-ordinator
4-H Heavy Horse Achievement Day
(780) 349-2262

4-H'ers studied hard for provincial judging

While many students were kicking back and relaxing this summer, close to 90 Alberta 4-H members cranked up the intensity level a few notches this August.

The 4-H Judging program, that ran August 11-13 in Olds, saw 4-H'ers aged 16 and older from across the province give their best efforts in assessing livestock for health and marketability. The top 20 finishers will be allowed to attend a judging program of their choice, some of which take place in Montana and Colorado.

"They do 13 classes, so it's extremely intense. From the time they started on Friday afternoon until we finished at around 9:00 p.m. Saturday night, they did almost straight judging," explains project event co-ordinator Charles Schoening, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's 4-H Branch. "The member that finished first got to pick their trip, so the competition was fierce to be on the top of the list."

There are four spots for Alberta 4-H delegates at the Northern International Livestock Exhibition in Billings, Montana; four at the Denver, Colorado 4-H Western Round Up; one for the

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Denver Western Stock Show, eight spots at Agribition in Regina and three places for 4-H judging delegates at the Calgary Stampede Livestock Judging School.

"All participants have to study hard and get some experience in competitive judging before going to Olds," says Schoening. "Everyone who judges here has gone through at least a regional program, and some will have judged at the club level as well."

Delegates judged swine, sheep, steers and breeding cows, dairy cows, and both lite and draft horses as well as attended workshops. Delegates also had to put their public speaking skills to use at Olds when they defended their judging decisions.

"We concentrate more on verbal skills than written because there are more times in life when you have to articulate your thoughts rather than write them," explains Schoening.

Delegates also had a chance to relax, as there as time set aside to attend the grandstand show at the Olds Mountain View County Fair, and organizers scheduled a pizza party and dance for them. The program, sponsored by Alberta Treasury Branches, wrapped up with a breakfast banquet, at which time the results were announced. Despite the intensity and hard work involved, delegates enjoyed the Judging program. It is an opportunity to not only improve their judging and public speaking skills, but also gave them a chance to spend time with old friends and make new ones. "There's time for fun during this program, but it's also a lot of competition and a lot of learning. It's quite a bit to take in over such a short time," says Schoening.

For more information on joining 4-H call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first), or visit the 4-H website at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h**>.

Contact: Charles Schoening
Provincial Programs Co-ordinator
(780) 427-4462

Agri-News Briefs

Market news

Several new articles have been posted to the ***marketnews*** section of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's website <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/marketnews/**>.

The content in the marketnews section of the website is targeted at export and export interested companies, associations and consultants. Documents marked by an Alberta flag are available to Alberta residents only. The content of this site is a joint initiative of Alberta Agriculture and Economic Development. Recent postings include:

USA

- Food Marketing Institute Show – John Cotton
- Food Marketing Institute Show – Wes Sawatzky
- Natural Products Expo West

CHINA

- Shanghai Feed Ingredient Market
- China's Honey Industry

MEXICO

- Elections in Mexico
- ANTAD Trade Show

EUROPE

- Organic Food Market in Europe

MARKETING & COMPETITIVENESS

- E-Business Summit Report

For further information, contact Marcy O'Connor, research officer with Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton, (780) 427-4243.

Alberta Horticulture Congress

Growing for Tomorrow is the theme of the 2000 Alberta Horticulture Congress. The Hort Congress, November 9 to 11, 2000, has arranged for an exciting line-up of speakers. The Alberta Greenhouse Growers (AGG) are bringing in Andre Carrier from the greenhouse vegetable industry in Quebec and Phil Reilly from Reilly's Country Gardens. Reilly's presentation will include a video and presentation of Inspirational Gardens East of the Ottawa Valley and another on Ornamental Grasses. The Hort Congress will also be hosting a panel on food safety and genetically modified organisms. Programs and registration forms will be posted in late August. To be included in the mail-out, contact the Hort Congress office at (780) 415-2324. For further information, contact Shirley Alton (780) 415-2324.

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Agri-News

August 21, 2000

Organic tour

Throughout the summer, several tours of organic operations have been planned, from crop tours to tours of organically raised poultry and livestock. On July 7, over 40 Albertans toured the Little Red Hen Mills, just outside of New Norway.

Little Red Hen Mills (LRHM) is a family operation and has been producing organically grown crops for 15 years. Those years of experience have resulted in the six-year rotation that the Snider family practices.

"It's important to rotate your crops and plowdown green manure to keep the soil in good shape and condition," says Steven Snider. "In our rotation, we start with a green manure plowdown, then the field is seeded to fall rye, followed by a cereal and pulse intercrop. The next year is a green manure plowdown again, then a wheat crop followed by peas and barley intercrop. The next year the rotation starts all over again."

Snider admits that it hurts a little to plowdown a good crop but it's worth it for the yield the following year.

"Weeds are always a concern," he adds. "But you're never going to get rid of all weeds, not by spraying, not with chemicals, not summerfallow work and not with plowdown. Timing of spring planting can be crucial to weed control. A general rule we follow is that if we see the Canada thistle coming up, the soil conditions are right for seeding. That's when we get ready to seed."

Along with timing of seeding in the spring for harvested crops and timing of plowdown of green manure growth, the right equipment can be most helpful controlling weed growth.

"Just prior to seeding we use a Kongskilde spiketooth cultivator. It has a two-inch, hooked shank spaced at eight-inches. It loosens the deep roots and the hook design helps pull the roots and not rip them. Then we follow with a rod weeder to pull the roots out. This is very effective for controlling quackgrass and Canada thistle," says Snider.

"When doing a plowdown, we use a disc with notched blades, they seem to work the best. A Noble Blade is also an effective tool we rely on. It leaves the stubble standing while it fractures and fluffs the land, enhancing water penetration and snow retention."

During green manure years in the rotation, faba bean is always included in the planting. Faba bean has the highest nitrogen fixation rate. The mix used at LRHM is barley, oats, faba bean and pea.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND

"Plowdown is usually done in late July or early August," explains Snider. "Timing of the plowdown depends on when we notice the first weeds reaching viable seed stage. Not allowing the weeds to set seed is also an effective control measure in minimizing weed regeneration on the field."

Other than the green manure, a limited number of organic inputs are used. One of the effective organic inputs used is a foliar feed. This is an emulsified fish and seaweed mix that is a naturally occurring fertilizer and is especially effective on legume crops. Foliar feeding is done when the crop has reached maximum canopy height that will still allow the sprayer machinery to cover it, or at about one and a half feet.

"On the fields that have been harvested, we will do a broadcast of soft rock phosphate in the fall," says Snider. "We use about 200 pounds per acre. This is a natural, slow release, soil stable product that contains a full slate of trace minerals and is a good source of phosphate. Fields that are in the plowdown year are not always given this fall application."

When the soil is kept healthy and crops are rotated to ensure good nutrient balance and condition, yields will be good. Good yield means good canopy cover and competition and that too helps reduce weed growth.

"We have excellent growing conditions this year and are expecting bumper yields, although last year's might be tough to improve on," says Snider. "We had rye yield 90 bus/acre on one 40 acre field and an overall average of 72 bus/acre. The wheat went just over 40 bus/acre last year and I think we will easily beat that one this year. The peas and oats that are out there this year should also produce a 80 bus/acre plus yield.

"Many Alberta producers are looking at organic growing with a lot of interest," says Mike Dolinski, organic specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "The tours planned each year by the organic industry are designed to help interested producers in adopting methods that have worked for people in the area that are already producing organically. This approach reduces risk to new organic farmers."

For more information on organic tours, contact Dolinski at (780) 422-4873.

Contact: Steven Snider
(780) 608-0905

Mike Dolinski
(780) 422-4873

Grazing alfalfa

Alfalfa has tremendous feed value. However, there is also a risk of bloat when grazing alfalfa that producers do need to be concerned and cautious about.

"Younger animals are more prone to bloat than older animals," says Terry Holmgren, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, St. Paul. "Most bloats are calves and yearlings. It also has been noted that some animals are very bloat susceptible and these animals need to be removed from alfalfa grazing."

The more mature the alfalfa, the less risk of bloat there is. Most cases of bloat occur when cattle are grazing immature, rapidly growing alfalfa. Once alfalfa has flowered, the risk of bloat is greatly reduced.

"After cutting an alfalfa field, the young regrowth is once again a much higher risk," says Holmgren. "When introducing cattle to alfalfa, producers should make sure they are well fed first. It's also good to move the cattle onto alfalfa around mid-day and not during prime grazing times, morning or evening."

Once cattle have been moved onto alfalfa, it's best to leave them there, unless bloat risk becomes too high. Gradually introducing cattle to alfalfa actually creates more of a problem with bloat. It is a good practice to provide some dry feed, such as hay or straw bales on the pasture. This can reduce bloat incidence.

"It's important to check the cattle regularly, observing the herd particularly in early mornings," adds Holmgren. "If any cattle appear to be starting to bloat, running them around can really help as the activity often helps the cows release built up gas in their digestive system."

Severe cases of bloat can require stomach tubing or stabbing through the rumen wall to release gas. Rumensin capsules can be fed to yearlings and Bloatgard pellets can be used to markedly reduce bloat incidences and severity. Mineral mixes that contain Bovaid can also reduce bloat.

Contact: Terry Holmgren
(780) 645-6301

Managing weeds in the lawn

Whether dealing with pesky weeds in a field or in a yard, many of the same principles apply. Chemicals, while they are an easy and less time consuming solution, aren't the only way to control problems.

"The best way to control weeds such as dandelions in a lawn is to keep it healthy," says Shelley Barkley, information officer at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South, Brooks. "This doesn't mean over fertilizing the lawn, but applying the right blend of nutrients at the right time to ensure a healthy, vigorously growing grass stand."

A moderate amount of fertilizer applied three times over the growing season, is recommended. It is best to start with a fertilizer blend high in nitrogen and low in phosphorous for the spring application and move to the opposite (low nitrogen - high phosphorous) toward mid-summer, this will maximize lawn health. The last application should be done

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before August 15. Fertilizing a lawn in the early fall, especially with nitrogen, can do more harm than good as it will prevent the lawn from going dormant.

When weed problems do 'crop' up, careful maintenance of the area can minimize the problems. Mowing patches of Canada thistle, for example, will help contain the spread in two ways. It prevents the plant from going to seed, even though very little of the fluffy seed that floats around actually produces plants. It also stresses the thistle plants, making them less healthy, whereas regular and proper cutting of grassy species actually improve their health. This gives the grass an edge over the thistle. It may take some time, but keep cutting those thistle patches to get rid of them.

Over years of traffic and plant growth, lawns or forage stands can become hard and compacted. Compaction makes it more difficult for water to soak into the soil, decreasing the efficiency of a watering or rain. A process called aeration removes cores of soil, allowing better movement of air, water and other nutrients to the grass roots. Compaction also results in weed invasion, and aeration can help minimize this weed invasion. How often a lawn should be aerated depends on the amount of traffic.

Alberta Yards and Gardens: What to Grow, an Alberta Agriculture publication, has a section on lawns, seeding and sodding, and lawn maintenance and care. This book is available for sale at all Alberta Agriculture rural advisory service offices and at the Publications Office, located in the J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Cost of the publication is $15 plus GST (add $2 plus GST for shipping and handling). To order by phone, call the Canadian toll free line at 1-800-292-5697 or (780) 427-0391 in the Edmonton area.

Contact: Shelley Barkley
(403) 362-1305

CDCS celebrates 65 years of research

On July 28, 2000, at the official 65th Anniversary celebration of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South, Brooks, Ron Howard, CDCS director, welcomed over 250 guests to the provincial agricultural research station.

"The organization of the event was directed by our very capable and enthusiastic 65th Anniversary Committee whose tireless efforts over the past year helped make the day informative and enjoyable for all," says Howard. "CDCS staff also received support from other individuals and groups within Alberta Agriculture who contributed their time to help with the Open House."

Sixty-five years ago, in 1935, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) transferred a large portion of its land holdings in the Brooks area to the newly formed Eastern Irrigation District (EID). This included a Demonstration Farm and a Headquarters Farm located within the present day limits of the Town of Brooks. The EID had no interest in operating the two farms and they were subsequently transferred to the province. This resulted in the formation of the Provincial Horticultural Station, which operated in Brooks until the early 50s, when the pressures of a growing town forced it to relocate to a new site east of town where the CDCS is presently located. Although the Centre has gone through several name changes in the past 65 years, the mandate remained largely the same, to foster the development of Alberta's agriculture and agri-food industry through crop diversification.

Prior to the official ceremonies, staff members led tours of the facility. Several displays and slide shows were also setup, demonstrating how special and important a part of Alberta Agriculture CDCS is.

During the ceremonies a colorful and interesting publication on the history of CDC South entitled *From the Bald Prairie, A History of the Crop Diversification Centre South*, written by one of the Centre's former Directors, Tom Krahn, was released. It describes many of the Centre's contributions to the development of Alberta's horticultural and special crops industries, particularly in the southern part of the province.

"Agriculture is on the doorstep of a new millennium, an era that is likely to be full of tough challenges on the one hand and exceptional opportunities on the other," adds Howard. "As a Centre, we remain committed to maintaining a high standard of service to the agricultural industry and, in turn, the general public. We look forward to providing another 65 years of achievements through applied research, extension and industry development work."

During the ceremonies, speeches were made by Monte Solberg, Member of Parliament for the Medicine Hat Constituency; Mara Nesbitt, representing Lyle Oberg, Minister of Learning and member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta representing the Strathmore - Brooks Constituency; Don Weisbeck, Mayor of the Town of Brooks; Brian Rhiness, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Industry Development Sector of Alberta, Agriculture; and, Ralph Christian, Executive Director of the Agriculture and Life Sciences Division of the Ministry of Innovation and Science and representing the Deputy Minister, Roger Palmer.

Dedications were made by: Alan Hall, director of the Plant Industry Division of Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton, who dedicated a human sundial; Anna Moeller, accountant at CDC South and representing CDCS staff, who dedicated a time capsule and its contents; and, Tom Krahn, director at CDC South from 1983 to 1998, who dedicated his new book *From the Bald Prairie, A History of the Crop Diversification Centre South*.

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Presentations were made by: Stan Blade, director of the Crop Diversification Centre North in Edmonton, donated a decorative garden bench; Lyle Aleman, operations manager at the Red Hat Cooperative in Redcliff, donated a cheque for $5000 for the Greenhouse Crops Program at CDCS; Hugh English, Redcliff Greenhouses, Redcliff, donated two cut flower arrangements; Wade Hartwell, Golden Acre Garden Sentres, Calgary, donated a Japanese tree lilac; and, The Alberta Market Gardeners' Association donated a chromed hoe and plaque.

Special guests at the event included: Earl Wilson, manager of the Eastern Irrigation District headquartered in Brooks; Doug Hargrave, son of P. Duncan Hargrave, who was the superintendent of the Provincial Horticultural Station from 1936 to 1969; Peter McCalla, head of the Horticulture Branch of the Alberta Department of Agriculture from 1948-81 and acting superintendent of the Provincial Horticultural Station from 1948-49; and, Bill Andrew, retired Professor of Horticulture of the University of Alberta.

The CDCS, the Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN), Edmonton and the Crop Diversification Centre Peace (CDCP) are integral parts of Alberta Agriculture's commitment to crop diversification, applied research and to Alberta farmers.

Contact: *Ron Howard*
(403) 362-1328

California delegate joins Canadian 4-H program

When Cristen Ferguson, 17, arrived in Canada from Ventura, California, the biggest change for her wasn't being surrounded by rural youth and wide-open prairies. It was getting used to seeing more of the sun than she does in California.

"I had to get used to how long it stays light here. I'm used to it getting dark at 8:30," she said around 9 p.m., as the sun shone brightly in the sky, on July 21. Ferguson, a diamond star member in her hometown 4-H club, was in Olds, Alberta as the only out-of-province participant in the 4-H Club Week program.

Unlike Alberta 4-H programs, California 4-H'ers progress through a system where they earn star rankings. As a diamond star member, the highest rank a 4-H'er can achieve in California, Ferguson was asked by her club's advisor if she would be interested in attending the program in Alberta. "Alberta 4-H sends two delegates to our state's leadership conference, so my advisor approached me to see if I'd be interested in coming here." Ferguson arrived on July 10 and stayed till July 24. With her club covering her registration and Alberta 4-H providing food, lodging and transportation, she was spared any hits to her own wallet. "I only had to pay for souvenirs," she said.

During her time in Alberta, she asked questions of 4-H members and learned all she could about 4-H in Canada. One of the first things that struck her is how much traveling Alberta 4-H members do. Through programs such as Selections, a program in which about 80 of the province's top 4-H members are chosen to take part in a variety of educational trips and exchanges, and the provincial judging program, which sends the top 20 Alberta 4-H judges to various livestock programs across western Canada and the United States, 4-H'ers can put on a lot of miles in a year. "I noticed that there are a lot of opportunities to go to different places. There are so many people in California that we don't go to Selections. We don't have as many opportunities to travel because there are so many people."

The sheer number of people also makes it difficult for California members to plan their own events. At Club Week, for example, all delegates joined committees which organized various events during the program, such as a talent show, a banquet, mini-Olympics and a dance. "One of the things I'll remember most is planning events here. There is no way we could do that at our conferences," said Ferguson.

She also had the chance to visit farms in the area, and found that many 4-H clubs in Alberta are dedicated to a certain area of agriculture, such as beef and dairy clubs. "There's a lot more rural stuff here than where I'm from. I spent a day on a farm with my host family. I don't do that very much in California," she said.

A second Club Week program will be held at Olds College from August 22 to 27, which will also welcome a California 4-H delegate for the duration of the program.

Contact: *Mark Muchka or Cara McDuff*
4-H Summer Programs Planning Team
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Marguerite Stark
Provincial 4-H Programs Specialist
(403) 948-8510

4-H'ers learn to make every second count

With the theme *Every Second Counts* planted firmly in their minds, close to 80 participants at the Alberta 4-H Club Week program made the most of their time together, which meant leaving their inhibitions and reservations at the door.

When she arrived at Olds College on Tuesday, July 18 for the program, 15-year-old Jodanna Frebrowski of Airdrie had a few reservations about letting herself go. "At first I felt like I was on the outside, looking in. But by Wednesday everything clicked, and I'm having so much fun that I don't want to leave," she said during the program. A member of the Airdrie

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Helping Hands 4-H Multi-club, Frebrowski spent so much time in previous years working on her club's veterinary science projects that she had never attended a 4-H summer camp. But the chance to meet new people and forget about the pressures of the outside world was all the incentive she needed to come out of her shell. "It was just a matter of letting go and not worrying about what others think. For me, it was getting in on volleyball and other games and getting to meet everyone," she explained. "You're here to have fun. I'll always remember all the smiling faces and people just seemed to come together, and work together and become friends for life, even though we just met. That's pretty amazing."

Sponsored by Agricore, the Bank of Montreal, UFA, Agrium, Alberta Motor Association, Lammle's Western Wear and UGG, the July 18 to 23 Club Week program is a chance for young people from across the province to meet and discuss issues of concern to them. With an unending stream of games and group work, delegates quickly develop an atmosphere of friendliness, openness and trust that allows them to share their own ideas and to listen with an open mind to the opinions of others. In this way, organizers hope all participants will leave with a greater sense of self-confidence and respect for both themselves and others, and will be able to draw on that in the years ahead.

The theme of this year's program, *Every Second Counts*, emphasized the importance of appreciating both the small and the monumental moments in one's life. "Small events have a huge and lasting impact on all of us," explained Club Week Co-organizer Mark Muchka. "It's important to stop and recognize what's going on around us, because it's such a fast-paced world."

When delegates arrived at Olds College at the beginning of the program, they were greeted by staff members dressed in period clothes, ranging from a late 19th century homesteader to a 1960s hippie, and even futuristic costumes. With these images in mind, delegates saw how much change can occur over a relatively short space of time. They also had the chance to meet people whose lives have changed drastically in a short period of time. Called *Overcoming Adversity*, this portion of the program introduced delegates to people who deal with the challenges of visual impairment, living with cancer and brain injury and adapting to life in a wheelchair. By seeing the twists and turns life can take, delegates are better prepared to learn from the events they face. "Unlike time, life varies and is not set in stone. With time comes experience and with experience comes personal development," said Muchka.

For more information on joining 4-H call 422-4H4H (toll-free through the RITE line at 310-0000) or visit the 4-H website at < www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h >.

Contact: *Mark Muchka or Cara McDuff*
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Agri-News Briefs

Organic greenhouse tour

Jim and Alissa Marles and Roy Irwin, West Country Herbs, Morinville, are hosting an organic greenhouse tour on September 9 at 1:00 p.m. The tour starts in Morinville with a visit to the organic greenhouses used to start echinacea plants. The tour then moves on to some extensive herb plots. Some of the herbs that will be seen and discussed include: echinacea, St. John's Wort, milk thistle, willow herb, coriander, black cumin, anise, hyssop and calendula. West Country Herbs has done a considerable amount of research and development in the germination, production and marketing of herbal products. For more information, contact Nedra at (780) 698-3981.

Direct seeding advantage

Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI) is sponsoring the Direct Seeding Advantage 2000 conference on November 21 and 22, 2000. The conference will be held at the Nisku Inn, Nisku. Registration is $50 per person and the registration deadline is November 6, 2000. For further information, contact Peter Gamache (780) 427-3361, Edmonton; Mark Olson (780) 980-4898, Leduc; or, Leanne Chubocha (780) 986-8985, Leduc.

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FBMP accepting applications and proposals

The Farm Business Management Program (FBMP) is once again accepting applications for proposals. Money and assistance are again available for Alberta projects through this program. These proposals can be submitted by a group, organization or individual.

"The funding or assistance that FBMP provides must address at least one of the following areas of priority: marketing; finances and/or human resources," says Morley Kjargaard, business and human resource development, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's FBMP, Olds. "Within these priority areas, projects and proposals must improve the management, skills, and knowledge for farmers."

Examples of suitable proposals include the following:

- a group organizing a workshop or conference including significant content on the priority areas;
- a group or community organization putting together a session to attract a specific guest speaker;
- an organization assembling or developing some type of a resource (newsletter or workbook) dealing with one or more of the priority areas;
- anyone with an idea or project that needs further development, FBMP can assist with writing and researching the concept.

Some advice before you apply:

"FBMP is committed to funding proposals that respond to an identified need," adds Kjargaard. "Applications from farm groups, commodity associations, community groups, learning institutions, and any other groups either directly or indirectly involved in agriculture are preferred. Individuals wishing to apply are encouraged to seek the support of an existing agency prior to submitting. Where proposals lack backing from an established organization, FBMP can assist with the identification or formation of a representative group."

FBMP is a results-oriented program. Applicants must have well-defined results associated with their proposal. Applicants should also be prepared to answer the following questions:

- Why is it important to achieve those results?
- Who will benefit from the project?
- What activities are planned to achieve the results?

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- Where and when will these activities take place?
- How can FBMP help?
- Who is responsible for the project?

"FBMP has approximately $200,000 to distribute in the current program year," says Kjargaard. "Proposals will be accepted on an ongoing basis until all funds have been allocated. While there is no minimum or maximum limits, the program is intended to leverage as many dollars as possible."

Initial proposals will be assessed within two weeks of being received by FBMP staff. Applicants may be asked to supply additional information before a decision is made on the proposal. Prior to developing and submitting a proposal, it is advisable to talk to one of the FBMP staff, Morley Kjargaard or Karen Carson (403) 556-4240, fax (403) 556-7545, or e-mail <**morley.kjargaard@gov.ab.ca**> or <**karen.carson@gov.ab.ca**>.

Information and applications forms for the FBMP can be found on Alberta Agriculture's website at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca**>.

Contact: Morley Kjargaard
(403) 556-4240

Nutrient management options

Livestock producers in the High Prairie area had the opportunity this winter to take part in a two-day intensive Nutrient Management Workshop. With hands-on activities and a range of practical information, they now have the skills and knowledge to create a detailed land resource management plan and to develop sustainable practices for their own farms.

One of five such workshops held across Alberta this winter, this workshop focused on nutrient management and related issues for livestock operations. Facilitated by LandWise Inc. and various specialists with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the workshop was funded by the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) Program.

"Producers at the workshop developed individual land resource management plans through hands-on exercises," says Randy Perkins, conservation technologist with Alberta Agriculture in Fairview. "Using air photos of their farm, as well as their own soils and manure nutrient information, participants learned how to relate all this information back, to develop a full plan for managing nutrients on their farm."

Beneficial management practices are cost-effective, practical methods that minimize environmental impacts. Participants also learned how to develop beneficial management practices uniquely suited to their own operation.

At the workshop, various specialists, including beef, soil and conservation specialists, and local veterinarians, presented information on different aspects of nutrient management such as water quality, greenhouse gases, composting and the code of practice for the safe handling of livestock manures.

"Information about using feed rations to reduce the loads of phosphorus, or to control what goes in to reduce what comes out in terms of nutrients, was also presented," says Perkins.

Participants also have the opportunity to follow up with individual specialists. For example, water engineers are working on some watering projects as follow-up with the past year's participants. Others may require an engineer for site planning or other issues.

"One of the real benefits of the course for participants is the links and networks they build with other specialists and resources," says Perkins.

In addition to the Nutrient Management Workshops, LandWise Inc. and Alberta Agriculture put on a one-day workshop in Airdrie for Alberta Agriculture staff, municipal planners and agricultural fieldmen. Along with presentations, participants worked on sample exercises such as calculating manure content using manure lab analysis, determining application rates based on nitrogen and phosphorus, determining phosphorus build-up, identifying beneficial management practices and calculating the economic value of manure. Another workshop, held in Fort Saskatchewan, was targeted specifically for manure applicators.

LandWise Inc. continues to work with Alberta Agriculture, AESA and the agricultural industry to update the curriculum for a new set of workshops coming this fall.

Contact: Randy Perkins
(780) 835-2291

Sclerotinia has shown up – now what?

Earlier this year, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's crop specialists warned that sclerotinia was going to be a problem if the inclement weather conditions experienced this spring continued. The cool, damp conditions did continue and Alberta producers now have sclerotinia problems in canola fields throughout some areas of Alberta.

"When producers see stem shredding and/or grey patches on stems that appear to be maturing early, it is an indication that they likely have the disease," says Jay Byer, cereal and oilseed specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Bonnyville. "Once the disease is identified, there are a few things that can be done to help minimize losses from this potentially devastating disease."

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Swath early – sclerotinia can lead to premature plant maturity and shattering of the pods. Swathing as early as possible will likely minimize the amount of canola on the ground. Normally swathing is recommend when 30 per cent of the seeds in the pods of the main stem have at least some color change. "If you push this envelope as much as you can, losses in Argentine canola may be minimized. If even an average of 10 to 15 per cent of the seeds have some color change, you may want to start swathing," adds Byer. "As long as the plant is physiologically mature, there won't be much yield or bushel weight loss and you may prevent pod shatter at swathing."

Swath with the dew – another way to minimize pod shatter is to swath when the crop is as moist as it can be. Swathing at night when the dew comes is one way to minimize pod shatter. While swathing from midnight to 8:00 a.m. may not the be most convenient, it may be the most profitable in the presence of sclerotinia. Dew softens pods and reduces seed loss at swathing time. Cereal crops do not experience this problem, so they can be swathed during the day, and get the canola down at night.

Do not roll – rolling not only is another operation that may lead to more shattering, but it can also compact the swath. Compacting the swath can lead to additional sclerotinia forming even after cutting the plant down under certain weather conditions. Small amount of damage sclerotinia have been multiplied many fold in the swath if the weather is cool and moist after cutting. If the crop is heavy and not prone to wind movement, rolling the swath will only pack the green matter and enhance the humidity of the swath microclimate. So only pack the swath into the stubble if you are afraid the crop will roll in the wind.

Producers who need to know whether or not they have a problem with this canola disease should call their local crop specialist or crop advisor.

Two factsheets, ***Disease Forecasting for Sclerotinia White Stem Rot in Canola*** (Agdex FS 149/632-4) and ***Sclerotinia Stem Rot of Canola*** (Agdex FS 149/632-5), produced by Alberta Agriculture, provide additional information on sclerotinia. These free factsheets are available at Alberta Agriculture Regional Advisory Service offices and at Alberta Agriculture's Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Contact: Jay Byer
(780) 826-3388

Alberta bison producers form commission

Alberta's bison producers have formed a refundable Commission. Established under the *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act*, the Alberta Bison Commission will have producer elected directors. The Commission's role is to develop and promote Alberta's bison industry

"The Commission was formed after two years of industry consultation by the Alberta Bison Association and the Peace Country Bison Association," says Norman MacKenzie, a bison producer from Foremost and member of the Alberta Bison Association. "Although the Associations have done the groundbreaking, the industry is now the size where a Commission supported by all bison producers is needed

"The Commission will use producer money to further develop and sustain the industry. Through the Commission, marketers will have access to industry funds to develop and pursue new market opportunities. The Commission may also use funds for production research and education."

Through the Commission, producers will have access to eartags, providing each animal with a unique identification number. "The tags will be used by all Canadian bison producers as part of the national mandatory livestock identification system and on-farm food safety program," adds MacKenzie. "The plastic tag will be required by all animals moving off of farms after December 31, 2000."

This is the sixth refundable Commission to form in Alberta. Producers must provide the service charge within five months of the birth of their bison calves. Producers who do not support the research and promotion activities of the Commission may ask for a refund. The Commission is obligated to provide a refund.

"Refundable Commissions must report both the number of producers requesting refunds and the total amount of the refunds each year," says Mike Pearson, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Agricultural Products Marketing Council (APMC), that supervises all 16 agricultural Boards and Commissions. "If, in any one year, more than 35 per cent of producers request a refund, or more than 35 per cent of service charges are refunded, the APMC would require a producer vote to see if the Commission should continue."

Contact: Mike Pearson *Norman MacKenzie*
(780) 427-2164 *(403) 867-2094*

Western Provinces discuss cross-border trade issues with North Dakota

Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta government representatives were in Bismarck, ND recently to express concern with regulations proposed for Canadian livestock exports.

Prairie Agriculture Ministers say the regulations now being developed by the North Dakota Board of Animal Health would restrict livestock exports from Canada into that state.

The proposed regulations, under North Dakota's Bill 1276, passed in 1999, would require testing of Canadian cattle for tuberculosis, brucellois, bluetongue and anaplasmosis, despite Canada's disease-free status as recognized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

"Our provinces value our trading relationship with North Dakota and want to maintain this important partnership," says Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Minister Clay Serby. "North Dakota's new regulations could jeopardize all the recent efforts between Canada and the United States to harmonize health, pesticide and veterinary regulations."

The meeting was another step in efforts that have been ongoing for more than a year to resolve this issue.

"Farmers and ranchers on both sides of the border have repeatedly told us that they need greater regulatory harmonization in order to improve farm family incomes. The proposed regulations represent a major hurdle in our efforts to reach this goal," says Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister Ty Lund.

Manitoba Agriculture and Food Minister Rosann Wowchuk adds, "These new regulations would essentially establish a non-tariff barrier and are contrary to the understanding drawn from the Northern Plains Conference held in Fargo last November. Bill 1276 would be inconsistent with NAFTA and the WTO."

The North Dakota Board of Animal Health will make its decision on the proposed rules in late September.

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Office of the Minister, Alberta Agriculture
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Len Ewanyk
Alberta Agriculture
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4-H'ers pick up new skills at Dairy show

The 2000 4-H Dairy Show is over, but participants will use what they learned there throughout the coming year as they work with their animals and get ready for the next show.

Held July 19 and 20, 2000 at the Red Deer Westerner grounds, the dairy show brought together about 60 Alberta 4-H dairy club members to showcase the animals they raised and their skills in handling them. Eighteen-year-old Jillian Chalack of Innisfail, a member of the Mountain View 4-H Dairy Club, says the judges at this show helped her become more perceptive of details when she judges dairy cows. "They help you along with your own view of the cattle or point out things that you never looked at as closely as they do," she says.

Chalack, who won several awards at the show, including junior and winter yearling conformation awards and top spot in the senior Dairy Quiz competition, says preparing for the shows takes a lot of effort, but it's worth it in the end. "I really like working before the show and getting the cattle ready. I like accomplishing things with my animals because it shows that you've been working with them."

Cody Hofstra of New Sarepta, 12-year-old member of the Rollyview 4-H Dairy Club, also picked up a few pointers during this year's show. "This time I improved my clipping skills. Every show I learn how to walk my calf better and how to pick the best calves," he adds.

Supported by the title sponsor Gas Alberta, Inc., the Alberta Dairy Industry and the Alberta 4-H Programs Trust, the dairy show is a chance for 4-H dairy club members to demonstrate their knowledge of dairy cattle and the dairy industry by participating in the Dairy Bowl, a question-and-answer session along the lines of *Reach for the Top*, and by completing a written exam. In addition, events such as the judging contest, the herdsmanship competition and showmanship classes gives them the opportunity to display their practical knowledge and skills in raising and handling their animals. The quality of the animals is assessed by a professional judge during the conformation classes. All in all, the dairy show packs a lot of learning into a short two-day gathering.

For 16-year-old Logan Chalack of Innisfail and member of the Mountain View Dairy Club, who earned the grand champion showman and clipping awards, as well as senior yearling and supreme grand champion conformation awards, notes that the dairy show was a chance to bring together everything he had been working on for the past few years. "There was a lot of work at home, getting calves halter broke and clipping them," he says. He was surprised at the number of awards he won, but he was also impressed with the co-operation and

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friendliness among the participants. "You meet a lot of people and you always learn something new. Everyone works together and makes a real team effort, so I think we get a lot out of this show."

For more information on joining 4-H call 422-4H4H (toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first), or visit the 4-H website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

Contact: Linsey Chalack
Provincial 4-H Event Co-ordinator
(780) 427-4378

Hard work pays off at 4-H Beef Heifer show

For Bryce Sutter of Hardisty, this year's Provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show ended his 4-H career on just the right note when he was awarded the senior grand aggregate award.

"Winning the grand aggregate award was a high moment, because this is my last year," says the 19-year-old member of the Battle River 4-H Beef Club.

As well as earning the grand aggregate award, Sutter took the top spot in both the senior judging contest and the overall individual judging reasons contest. This is good news for Sutter, who, when he finishes his agricultural business program in Vermilion next spring, plans to begin a career in the cattle industry. For that reason, his participation in the show was not only a good experience for him, it was good way to meet people already working in the industry. "By competing in events such as this show, people begin to know who you are. You meet so many people doing this."

The provincial 4-H Beef Heifer Show, held at the Bashaw Agricultural Grounds from July 16 to 18, 2000, brought together more than 200 Alberta 4-H members to show their cattle projects, their skills in judging and their knowledge of the beef industry. With sponsorship from Gas Alberta, Inc., ABS Canada, Alberta Treasury Branches, Ivomec and UFA, there was never a dull moment for participants, who worked constantly to ensure their animals were cleaned, groomed and in the show rings on time.

"Every morning the latest we got up was 5:30 a.m. and we usually went to bed at 11:00 p.m.," says Sutter. "Most people, if they're not used to working with show cattle, think you just bring them to the show and lead them around. But it actually takes so much work."

There were few complaints, however. Like Sutter, 15-year-old Greg Pugh of Edgerton welcomed the opportunity to show his project animals and meet other people with an interest in raising livestock. "I don't mind getting up early and washing the cattle or doing whatever has to be done. Even if you don't win, you can go and meet people. That's enough for me," he adds.

Pugh, a member of the Edgerton 4-H Multi-club, earned the reserve champion award in senior team grooming at Bashaw this year. Although he was clearly pleased with this, he seemed even more impressed with how much he learned by taking part in the show and by seeing how professional judges assess cattle. "I think the judges were very good with their reasons in the grooming competition. When they explained why they picked the grand champions, we learned what we could do next time," says Pugh.

This was the 24th annual 4-H Beef Heifer Show. During the show, long-time sponsor UFA was honored for that company's continued support of the program.

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

Contact: Charles Schoening
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National no-till conference

The 9th National No Till Conference is being held in Cincinnnati, Ohio, on January 10 to 13, 2001. Event registration cost is $194.00 U.S. Registrations can be made by calling toll free 1-800-645-8455 for more information. The conference is being held at the Omni Netherland Plaza Hotel and the room rate is $80.00 U.S. per night plus taxes. For reservations call 1-800-843-6664. For further information, contact Mark Olson, reduced tillage agronomist with Alberta Reduced Tillage Initiative (ARTI), (780) 980-4898, Leduc.

Alberta Waste Materials Exchange

Effective April 1, 1997, the ***Alberta Waste Materials Exchange*** became part of the information services provided by Alberta's Recycle Info Line. The Line developed as part of Alberta Environmental Protection's *Action on Waste* program, has been serving the Alberta public with waste management and recycling information referrals since 1991. Incorporation of the waste exchange into this service will enable callers to be directed to the service which best suits their needs. Immediate assistance can be provided to those looking for readily available markets for waste materials. Those materials for which there is limited or not yet established markets can be listed on the Exchange. Contact locations are available by calling toll-free 1-800-463-6326, (780) 427-6982 in the Edmonton area. Requests for information can also be made by faxing (780) 422-5120 or by e-mail <**wastenot@env.gov.ab.ca**>. Alberta Waste Materials Exchange also has a website address <**http://www.gov.ab.ca/env/waste/aow/**>.

Agri-News

September 4, 2000

Alberta farmers stopped at Montana border

Montana, like most other American states, does not allow the use of marked fuel on roads. Montana farmers are allowed to use marked (tax exempt) fuel for off- road farming operations only. Alberta farmers entering Montana are being checked by customs for marked (red) diesel or gasoline in their trucks. Some have been asked to drain the marked fuel and refuel with clear, before being allowed to cross the border.

"This issue surfaced about five years ago," says Dale Dowswell, administrator of Alberta's Farm Fuel Registry, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "At about that time, U.S. legislation mandated lower sulfur content for diesel motor fuels used on all U.S. roads. Any diesel fuel with a higher sulfur content must be coloured red and can only be used in off-road industries. Heavy fines were legislated against illegal use of red diesel."

"Alberta farmers are again reporting problems relating to coloured fuel in their Alberta trucks when entering Montana," adds Dowswell. "This time red gasoline is also being targeted. This may simply be enforcement of Montana's legislation prohibiting use of marked fuel on roads, however, Alberta farmers should be aware that Alberta plated vehicles are being checked. Since state farmers are not allowed to use marked gasoline or diesel in their trucks, they may view such use by Albertans would be perceived as an unfair advantage."

All U.S. states and Canadian provinces legislate highway traffic regulations including those for fuel tax. Vehicles entering from bordering states or provinces are expected to abide by those laws.

Many farmers and fuel suppliers still refer to marked fuel as *purple*, but the dye has, in fact, been red for a number of years. Alberta farmers might think that their Alberta fuel is different than the Montana marked fuel and therefore, should be no problem. Montana is currently saying that marked fuel is not acceptable no matter where it may have been purchased.

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Poinsettia scab

A fungal disease of poinsettias called Poinsettia Scab has been found on the rooted cuttings that came from a U.S. supplier.

"This disease can spread by splashing water and can cause significant leaf damage so that plants are rendered unsaleable," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North, Edmonton. "The symptoms can be recognized by the raised, chlorotic spots on leaves with brown centres and purple rims. The spots can be round or angular and will appear as scabs not flat as they are in the case of cyocel growth regulator applied on poinsettias."

The symptoms can also appear on the stem as whitish raised lesion. Once the disease is established, it promotes excessive elongation of the infected stems as if gibberlins have been applied. The stem appears to stand above the rest of the plant.

"There are many fungicides that can help to reduce the disease incidence, but roguing the plants out is very important at early stages of development," adds Mirza.

A two-page writeup has been prepared that outlines the details about this disease and how to handle the crop. To receive a copy, contact Mirza at (780) 415-2303.

Contact: *Dr. M.Mirza*
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mohyuddin.mirza@gov.ab.ca.

Fusarium head blight

Fusarium head blight has the potential to become a major problem in Alberta's wheat and barley crops. The disease has had a big impact in Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan for a few years and appears to be spreading. With easy movement of grain among provinces, it could be transported very easily to Alberta.

"The fusarium organism is most active in a wet year," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Wetaskiwin. "It was particularly a problem further east in wet years. Grain kernels turned a chalky white and the disease produced a form of vomitoxin that affects monogastric animals such as pigs. It also grows rapidly in the malting process, resulting in very foamy beer. Manitoba farmers were unable to feed their grain to their pigs and at least one major malting company started buying their barley further afield. The disease may not be as prevalent now but the causal organism will still persist in areas where it was previously a problem.

"Fusarium is present in Alberta, but not usually the type that produces vomitoxin. *Fusarium graminarium* (the type that does produce vomitoxin) has been found in a few fields at trace levels, but it has been contained up to now."

The problems are mostly associated with seedling diseases and poor stand establishment. Seed treatments help to control the disease at that stage. Spores still appear on the head but they don't do as much damage. It is possible to diagnose fusarium on the head but it has to be plated-out to determine which species is present.

"There are some steps that farmers can take to reduce their risk from fusarium head blight," adds Hockridge. "The most basic is to follow a good crop rotation. Corn fields often serve as a source of infection. Wheat is the most susceptible of normal cereals, then barley and finally oats. Canola and peas both provide a break in the disease cycle, as do perennial forages. Buying uninfected seed is also a fundamental step and seed treatments help. Fungicide treatments have been inconsistent in their results. Other steps can be taken, but people normally want to confirm they have the disease before taking them."

This is an ideal time to assess most diseases affecting crops. If any of these diseases are going to affect yields, it will be possible to see symptoms on the plants now. There is not much that can be done to protect crops for the rest of this year. Field scouting at this time can help with adjustments to crop rotations for next year, or even help avoid possible problems such as fusarium for the future.

A factsheet, ***Fusarium Head Blight of Barley and Wheat*** (Agdex FS 110/632-1), produced by Alberta Agriculture, provides additional information on fusarium. This free factsheet is available at Alberta Agriculture Regional Advisory Service offices and at Alberta Agriculture's Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. This factsheet is also available on the Alberta Agriculture website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/100/1006321.html>**

Contact: *Ron Hockridge*
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Alberta Bison Commission directors appointed

The Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council has appointed nine interim directors to the Alberta Bison Commission. "The *Marketing of Agricultural Products Act* allows Marketing Council to appoint a fully functional interim board of directors until the first producer elections can be held," says Mike Pearson, a manager with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Agricultural Products Marketing Council, Edmonton.

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"Both the Alberta Bison Association and the Peace Country Bison Association encouraged bison producers to submit their names as potential interim directors," adds Pearson. "Marketing Council then reviewed and ratified the names brought forward by industry. All nine of the interim directors must be Alberta bison producers."

The appointed interim directors are: Norman MacKenzie of Foremost; Cliff Richards of Sexsmith; Vern Moore of Debolt; Bob Dodds of Cold Lake; Paul Kolesar of Calahoo; Todd Plandowski of Lloydminster; Greg Lumley of Vermilion; Brian Moore of Rimbey; and, Ken McCullough of Calgary.

"We have a big job ahead of us to set-up the initial workings of the Commission," says newly appointed interim board member, Norman MacKenzie. "There are many things to consider and we want to do the best job for the entire bison industry.

The Commission will soon be establishing an office address and will continue to inform producers of their obligations to the Commission.

"We have already been working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canadian Bison Association to ensure that Alberta producers have access to the mandatory national animal identification tags," says MacKenzie.

The first annual meeting of the Alberta Bison Commission and the first producer elections are expected within the next few months.

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Alberta Bison Commission
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Fun and challenge at 4-H'ers camp

With people coming from both urban and rural Alberta, and even some coming from as far away as the Northwest Territories and Japan, there was quite a diverse mix of people, but never a shortage of enthusiasm, at the Alberta 4-H People Developing People camps, held July 23 to 28, July 30 to August 4 and August 13 to 18, 2000.

"It was great. There were a lot of really good activities at the programs, and never a dull moment while we were there," says 15-year-old James Holt of Lloydminster, member of the Rivercourse 4-H Multi-club.

Sponsored by Agricore, Peavy Industries, Lammle's Western Wear, UFA-AgPro, Weyerhaeuser, and Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, the program brought five Aboriginal delegates from Saddle Lake, Alberta, Fort Simpson and the Lutsel K'e Dene band in the NWT; urban participants from Edmonton, Leduc and Lethbridge and Japanese exchange students to the Alberta 4-H Centre at Battle Lake, west of Wetaskiwin. There, they joined approximately 150 4-H members for games, activities and personal development and environmental discussion sessions.

"Having people from outside the 4-H program at the camp was a good experience, and despite the different backgrounds, everyone fit in and got along well," adds Holt, who shared a room with one of the Aboriginal delegates. "They were really cool guys. Having different people there was a lot of fun."

During the program, delegates not only took part in games and discussion groups, but were divided into small groups and given the task of coming up with a land-use plan for an imaginary piece of property. With each group representing a different sector, from resource companies and farmers, to recreational developers and environmentalists, there was no shortage of opinions on what should be done with the fictitious land. However, by going through the process of developing a plan and debating the merits and flaws of other groups' proposals, participants gained some insight into what it takes to cooperate on difficult issues.

"In the environmental hearing process, I was with the ranching group and we merged with the forestry group," says Holt. "Some of the other groups had really good questions and managed to out-think some of our proposals. There were a lot of different things we had to look at because the hearing covers a really wide area."

"Areas such as fish and wildlife and forestry were covered by guest speakers and that helped prepare delegates for their presentations," says thirteen-year-old Denver Powell, member of the Namao 4-H Trail Busters Club near Edmonton. "With small groups meeting for up to an hour each day, there was a lot of responsibility on the delegates to get themselves ready for the hearing. There was a lot more thinking and work than at most camps. Usually, you just do the activities that counselors have for you. The questions at the environmental hearing were hard. Most were from the environmentalists, who wanted to know what we were doing to protect wildlife.

"Hard work or not, the camp was a good time from start to finish with plenty of activities to keep everyone busy. I learned a lot about the environment and on how to present thoughts and ideas. Overall, it was lots of fun – 4-H camps always are."

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

Contact: *Marguerite Stark*
Provincial 4-H Programs Specialist
(403) 948-8510

4-H heavy horse club members showcase projects

They may not be the biggest membership, but the members of the 4-H Draft Horse Club definitely have some of the biggest animals, and 18 young Albertans showcased their projects at the 4-H Heavy Horse Achievement Day, held on August 10, 2000 at the Olds Fairgrounds.

With support from the Wildrose Draft Horse Association, 4-H'ers from across the province were recognized for their achievements as they judged, showed, decorated and drove heavy horses under a hot summer sun. This was also the first year that mature members, who have worked with draft horses for the past three years, drove a two-horse team for the judge.

"Getting draft horses to pull a wagon is more demanding than most people realize," says Zephrin LaRiviere, 16-year-old member of the Stony Riders 4-H Club, Stony Plain. "It's a lot of work. Every day for two months before the show, I've been driving them to get them in shape and getting them to pick up their feet and move together. I didn't know what to expect when I started driving them together, because this was my first year working with a team."

But, the hours of work paid off for LaRiviere, when he won the driving competition in addition to earning overall high-point honors in the mature member class. "It was definitely worth the effort," he says. "I have a good time every year at this show."

Since the 4-H draft horse program is only in its fourth year and has fewer members than most 4-H projects, the people taking part in it know each other well and look forward to meeting at the Heavy Horse Achievement Day. "It's fun. I enjoy the visiting and there are new people here every year," adds 13-year-old Katie Hart of Leduc. "Working with draft horses is fun because your friends will let you use their horses and you can find out what they're like compared to your own."

Hart, a member of the Humble Ace of Clubs 4-H Club, is in her second year of the heavy horse project. Getting her horse ready for the show took some practice, but wasn't as hard as hard as she though it would be. "It took about two weeks to harness break her. She took to it right away, and got better and better at it," she says.

Each member works with his or her draft horse for up to four years, then has the option of going through the course again. With two years of heavy horse experience under her belt, Hart is half done already. But she is looking forward to the challenges that await her as the program becomes more demanding with each year. "It was more fun this year because there was more competition. Last year I just had to do showmanship and decorating. This year I had to do driving," she adds.

When members join the 4-H heavy horse program, they start with a yearling colt, and learn how to halter break the animal and decorate its mane and tail. They also study conformation, hoof care and the parts of the harness. In the following year, 4-H'ers are taught how to ground drive their horses, which involves walking behind the animal as they drive it through a pattern; in addition, they learn to decorate their horses under timed conditions. When the horses reach their third year, delegates are taught how to drive them from two-wheeled carts. Only after working with draft horses for three years are members classified as mature and permitted to drive two-horse teams.

For more information about joining 4-H call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

Contact: *Charles Schoening*
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(780) 427-4462

Invitation to Food Fest 2000

The Peace Value Added Food and Ag Association invites producers, processors and retailers of products made in the Peace, as well as chefs and restaurants using Peace products to participate in **Food Fest 2000**. As part of Small Business Week, Food Fest 2000 is being held October 29, 2000 at the Crystal Centre in Grande Prairie and includes a major trade show and culinary challenge competition. There will be a breakfast for invited guests for the private showing of the trade show in the morning and awards presentations will be held at 4:00 p.m. Demonstrations and presentations will be scheduled throughout the day.

"Food processors, manufactures of unique giftware, and Albertans who create fine art innovations or operate a food service outlet or specialty store, will find the trade show of interest," says Anita Schreyer, Peace Value Added Food and Ag Association, Grande Prairie. It will bring growers and processors of locally produced, unique, quality products together with industry buyers, retailers and consumers and promises to be an event ripe with market development opportunities."

The culinary challenge, a "black box" cook off competition, allows chefs and members of the food service industry to meet processors and gain first-hand experience with locally produced, new food products. Regional celebrities and media personalities will have a chance to show their creative skill in the kitchen as well. Great food, good fun and a spirit of friendly competition will increase consumer awareness of Peace County food products.

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The educational seminar component of Food Fest 2000 includes a safe food handling workshop and, for trade show participants, a seminar on developing effective displays for trade shows.

Registrations for Food Fest 2000 events will be accepted on a first come, first served basis until September 15, 2000 pending space availability, fee payment and successful adjudication results.

Food Fest 2000 is an initiative of the Peace Value Added Food and Ag Association. In 1997, the idea for the Association was developed by a number of small, agrifood producers and processors who banded together to provide a business network, resources and support for the development and marketing of members' products. The Association now boasts a growing membership of over 40 value added entrepreneurs.

One of the priorities of the Peace Value Added Food and Ag Association is to create partnerships to maximize available resources and promote viable value added business ventures. They've applied this partnership philosophy to Food Fest 2000. Current project partners include the Alberta Pork Producers' Marketing Board, Alberta Chefs' Association, Peace Region Economic Alliance, Grande Prairie District Chamber of Commerce, Alberta Economic Development and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

For information and registration materials for Food Fest 2000 or the Peace Value Added Food and Ag Association, please contact Schreyer at (780) 568-2915.

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Western Canadian grazing conference

The Western Canadian Grazing Conference will be held at the Capri Centre in Red Deer on December 6 to 8, 2000. The conference is hosted by the Alberta Forage Council. For further information on the conference, contact the Council at (403) 782-0772 or contact Richard De Bruijn at 1-877-527-0772.

Berry crop watch 2000

Provincial **saskatoon** production is spotty this year. Initial indications suggested the good bloom would result in a good fruit set. Unfortunately, due to a number of frosty nights at or shortly after bloom, many producers experienced a substantial fruit drop. Some growers, however, are harvesting an average yield. **Strawberry** producers in south-central Alberta are reporting an average to good crop with very good customer activity. The heat wave in southern Alberta is making field cooling of day-neutrals a necessity. Cooler, rainy weather in northern Alberta is causing increased development of gray mould and measures are being taken to halt the disease. **Raspberry** producers in the warmer areas are watching for and managing for spider mite build-up. Production is also lighter than average in some areas. High temperatures (+30) in southern Alberta has decreased size and yield of **black currants**. Winds combined with rapid ripening also increased fruit drop in some areas. For further information about berry crops in the province, contact Lloyd Hausher, provincial fruit crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South, Brooks, (403) 362-1309.

Berries in Alberta

Strawberries in Alberta (Agdex FS 232/20-4) is a factsheet that focuses on home garden strawberry production. It gives information on varieties, nutrition, site location, soil preparation, planting, maintenance, bird protection, harvesting and winter protection. ***Currants and Gooseberries in Alberta*** (Agdex FS 236/20-1) is information for Albertans with small yards where fruit trees are not practical. Currants and gooseberries provide a good fruit substitute. Information includes how to choose and prepare the location and soil and how to select, propagate, fertilize, prune and harvest. It also describes recommended cultivars. ***Raspberries in Alberta*** (Agdex FS 237/20-1) provides tips on site selection, soil preparation, nutrition, planting, maintenance, harvesting and winter protection. With relatively little work, raspberries are one of the most rewarding fruits to grow in the home garden. ***Saskatoons in Alberta*** (Agdex FS 238/20-1) describes how to grow this native fruit successfully. Saskatoons are excellent when eaten fresh, cooked in pies and desserts, canned, frozen or made into wine or juice. These free factsheets, produced by Alberta Agriculture, are available at Alberta Agriculture Regional Advisory Service offices and at Alberta Agriculture's Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. They factsheet are also available on the Alberta Agriculture website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/200/freedex.html#fruit>**

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September 11, 2000

Farmers – make safety a top priority during harvest!

Alberta has 59,007 farms with over 83,000 farm operators. Compared with other industries it is considered to be high-risk. Farm work involves operating and maintaining a variety of heavy equipment, handling livestock, and working long hours. As the harvest season begins, it's important that farmers and their families make safety a top priority.

Farmers face additional pressure this time of year, as they race against time and weather to get the crops in. But the completion of harvest depends on knowledge, alertness, and hazard awareness.

The following safety tips can prevent serious injuries and save lives during the busy harvest season:

- Keep children off grain transportation equipment, and know where your children are at all times.
- Clear plugged equipment only after the power is turned off.
- Place and secure all guard and shields before equipment is started.
- Wear comfortable, close-fitting clothing, including sturdy, protective footwear.
- Check fire extinguishers before harvest to ensure they are in working order.
- Take regular breaks away from the combine to avoid drowsiness and fatigue.
- Be cautious when working under overhead power lines. Know the clearance that your equipment needs.

"The long hours of harvest increase the risk of fatigue, drowsiness, and subsequent illness and injury," says Alan Perry, WCB-Alberta Agriculture marketing representative, Edmonton. "There's a common misconception that only the people operating the combine-harvester are most at risk. However, everyone involved in the harvesting operations, in any capacity, may be at risk and should know how to prevent injuries."

"During this busy time of the year, farm families need to come together and work together safely, to harvest the crops and get the crops into bins," adds Solomon Kyeremanteng, manager, Farm Safety Program, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton.

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Alberta AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND

Reducing injuries and preventing fatalities should be part of the farm operation in any season. Making safety a top priority will prevent a lot of unnecessary suffering, downtime and lost revenue. Farm safety is very important. Remember the Alberta Agriculture safety theme – ***A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow***.

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Advertising pasture, hay or feed on the internet

Producers selling pasture, hay or feed should make sure they are listed on the internet. Producers who are buying, can look at the listings before making a deal.

"It's a good service, it's free, it's current and the lists can be accessed at most district Agriculture offices in the province," says Bjorn Berg, forage specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lethbridge.

The drought conditions in southern Alberta have created high demands on local feed supplies while some areas of northern Alberta and Saskatchewan have feed surpluses. When producers have feed surpluses they have to advertise everywhere to make a sale. When the local supply is tight, livestock operations have to find growers in areas they may only know from the map. Alberta Agriculture has operated listing services before, but never on this scale of exposure. The website makes it easy and efficient and brings it all together.

"These listings can be accessed using a home computer," says Berg. "Producers who haven't made the step to the new technology yet, can visit the local Alberta Agriculture district office and access the internet lists through the computers there. Many offices have a computer dedicated to that purpose. And if that's not convenient, a call to an Alberta Agriculture office makes it possible to have the client service representative place an ad for you or send you a copy of some of the listings to your home address."

There are a couple of sites that post information on hay and pasture. The Alberta Agriculture site is at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/store/haylist.html**>. Most listings are for feed or pasture within Alberta, with a few from British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The listing date is stated and each listing may be on the board for a maximum of 60 days.

The Internet Hay Exchange is a separate list run out of Missouri that includes all provinces and states. Its website address is <**http://www.hayexchange.com/index.html**>.

"When listing feed, take care with pricing and quality. Ask a price, it's like an opening bid at an auction," adds Berg. "Nothing is more discouraging to a buyer than price uncertainty, so don't list feed with 'price negotiable' or worse, 'open to offers'. Be realistic. Buyers have alternatives so you must price within a range that won't force them to look elsewhere. For example if you're in Peace River and are hoping for a sale in High River, you may have to balance your price with the cost of transportation against that of a competitor in Camrose with a the lower transportation cost."

Everything looks the same on the internet services. Sellers will want buyers to look at their listing and write down the phone number before they go on to the next listing. So it is important to distinguishing your feed by stating a bale weight and hay quality or any other feature that might make a difference (such as tarping or a cutting date).

Buyers should always buy by weight and quality to avoid disappointment.

Table 1. Cost per ton of feed for different weights of small square and large round bales

	Bale price			
Bale weight (lb)	$2.00	$2.50	$3.00	$3.50
	Small squares			
50	$80	$100	$120	$140
55	$73	$91	$109	$127
60	$67	$83	$100	$117

	Bale price			
Bale weight (lb)	$30	$35	$40	$45
	Large rounds			
1000	$60	$70	$80	$90
1200	$50	$58	$66	$74
1400	$43	$50	$57	$65

"Sellers who offer a price per bale should be asked if they are willing to adjust their price to a weight basis on receipt of a scale ticket," says Berg. "Some listings are out-of-country so you'll have to account for the exchange rate."

Listings for pasture should be handled in the same manner: always list a price and the number of acres available, and distinguish the listing with items such as water sources or

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handling facilities. Use a standard measure such as AU's (animal units) instead of *cow/calf pairs* or *grassers* to avoid problems. For example, an unweaned 550 lb calf with a 1400 lb cow has a forage demand equivalent to two AU's. A rate of $20 per month for this cow/calf pair will be underpriced, while a rate of $20 per AUM will cost a more realistic $40 per month.

"There is no adequate price discovery mechanism for a bulky product like hay, and pasture that can't be moved," says Berg. "The internet is the closest we've come to a regular market for these commodities."

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Value of standing greenfeed

The value of greenfeed is dependent upon a number of variables: livestock being fed, price of oats, price of other forages such as hay or silage and a risk factor. In some cases the crop is being salvaged due to hail or potential frost, poor weed control, or it is being used as a cover crop for forage establishment.

"Many factors contribute to the value of standing greenfeed making the price range from 0.5 cents to 1.13 cents per pound," says George Rock, farm management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Leduc. "Greenfeed can also be variable in quality. A number of farmers are asking the value of forages and specifically what the value of greenfeed is, standing in the field. There are at least two possible ways of pricing these products; price based on the estimated final price of the product or the price of oats."

Estimated Final Price of Product

Good greenfeed, cut at early dough, harvested with little or no rain is the same value as good hay, about $60 per ton or more this year due to the drought in southern Alberta. Poor quality greenfeed will be worth less, assume values of $50 and $40 per ton. Assuming costs of cutting with a haybine at $11 per acre, baling at $7 per bale (1200 lb bales), hauling at $2 per bale, a risk factor of 30 per cent, and a yield of 2.5 tons per acre at 15 per cent moisture, a standing price per pound or ton can be arrived at. Assume a final price of greenfeed of $60, $50 and $40 per ton. Using revenues and costs per ton, expected harvest costs would be $4.40, $11.67 and $3.33 per ton for cutting, baling and hauling respectively for a total of $19.40 per ton. A risk allowance of 30 per cent is used for factors such as weather, price, machinery breakdowns and others. Then, on a $60 per ton revenue deduct $19.40 for harvesting costs and $18 for risk allowance for total costs of $37.40 making the value of standing crop equal to $22.60 per ton or 1.13 cents per pound.

Price of greenfeed	Price of standing greenfeed, per ton	Per pound
$60 per ton	$22.60	1.13 cents
$50 per ton	$15.60	0.78 cents
$40 per ton	$8.60	0.43 cents

Price of Oats

Another method is to use the price of oats as grain to calculate the value of the crop, then deduct the harvest costs less risk to arrive at a net value. Assume a 90 bushel/acre crop at $1.20 per bushel for a gross value of $108 per acre.Using swathing at $7, combining at $22, hauling to bin at $2.25 and hauling to point of sale of $0.18/BU gives us a total cost of $45.65, a gross value of $62.35 less a 20 per cent risk factor of $12.47 gives a net value of $49.88. In this calculation, a 20 per cent risk factor is used as opposed to 30 per cent in example one because combining oats for a reasonable return is less risky (20% vs 30%) than making good quality greenfeed. However, estimating dry matter yield is not as easy. Material from Manitoba calculates the potential yield of greenfeed equal to the weight of the grain plus weight of grain times 1.2 to estimate the weight of the straw, less 20 per cent harvest loss and 15 per cent moisture gives a calculated yield of greenfeed of 2.69 tons. Then, dividing the net value of $49.88 by 2.69 tons gives a value of standing greenfeed of $18.52/ton.

Price of oats per bushel	Price of standing greenfeed per ton	Price of standing greenfeed per pound
$1.20	$18.52	$.01
$0.90	$10.50	½ cent per pound

"When determining the value of a crop such as greenfeed, its best alternate use can be a useful principle in making the calculations," adds Rock. "Ask yourself whether the crop would make good quality grain, fair quality grain, good quality greenfeed or poor quality greenfeed, and then work from there."

Contact: *George Rock*
(780) 986-8985
george.rock@gov.ab.ca.

Tourists – a new market for food products

Almost everyone who travels the east coast of Canada tries lobster. Visitors to Holland, traditionally bring back cheese, France - maybe wine, Vancouver - smoked salmon. Food and tourism just go together.

"With each passing decade the world becomes more global," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Westlock.

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"Globalization brings out the need to preserve our identity and the desire to experience new and different things. These trends are reflected in the tourism industry. Tourists look for adventure and have a renewed interest in culture and heritage. Food ties in perfectly with culinary adventure and heritage cuisine."

Other countries and regions link food with their tourism industry. Regional products are easy to identify, source and purchase. The fact that tourism is the world's fastest growing industry, coupled with the changes in trends, signifies opportunities for prairie processors.

Entering the tourism market is not for every food processor or producer. Accessing the tourism market means changing perspective and studying the market. You have to know what segment of the tourism market you want to go after. Is it the Alberta tourist, other Canadians, U.S. or overseas travellers? What is the main purpose of their travel? Are they visiting friends and relatives, on a pleasure trip, or are they business travellers?

"The tourism industry is large and complex," adds Engel. "There are some basic assumptions that can be made. Imagine yourself as the traveller, trying new foods in a restaurant in a foreign country, or purchasing gifts to take home. You want premium quality, uniqueness and attractive, interesting packaging. You're more likely to purchase if the product is easily recognized as being local. Word of mouth is the primary source of information about regional products. As a producer or processor selling products to tourists, you'll want to give them something to talk about."

Travel and tourism reservations recently surpassed the sale of books and computers on the internet. That's just another indication the tourism market presents growth opportunities for Alberta processors and producers. Market potential is limited only by imagination.

This column was taken from the latest issue of the North West Processor (NWP) newsletter. For more information on accessing, packaging and bundling food products for the tourism market call (780)349-4465 and ask to be put on the mailing list for the NWP. The NWP links micro-food processors and farm managers with food industry research, technology and information. The NWP is printed quarterly and is distributed free of charge. Look for it on the Alberta Agriculture website, at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/food/process/nwp/index.html**>.

Contact: Kerry Engel
(780) 349-4465

4-H horse enthusiasts attend Horse Classic

With 130 members from 31 Alberta 4-H light horse clubs plus 80 volunteer leaders on hand, the 2000 *Provincial Horse Classic* was certainly a success. Many new faces and clubs were evident at this year's event.

"The participation focus of the program plus the support from our six co-sponsors; Lammle's Western Wear, UFA, SSG Gloves, Gas Alberta Inc, Burwash Brand Horse Gear and Masterfeeds, gives attending 4-H Horse project members an opportunity to succeed," says Henry Wiegman, Alberta Agriculture provincial 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Food, Agriculture and Rural Development, Edmonton. "The program focus encourages participation through 4-H members comparing horse knowledge, enhancing skills and socializing with other 4-H horse project members."

Contests were for both individuals and teams. Everyone who registered was automatically entered in the hippology contest. This tested members' equine knowledge through five phases: knowledge stations, live horse judging, identification stations, a quiz and team problems.

The top four senior members, based on individual hippology points, qualified for the *Denver Western 4-H Horse Classic Award Trip* , January 2 to 7, 2001 sponsored by Lammle's Western Wear, UFA-AgPro and Alberta Treasury Branches. They are: Tamara Quaschnick of Hanna, a member of the Berry Creek 4-H Horse Club; Jennifer Folton of Brooks, a member of the Bow River Riders Club; Amanda Winder of Morinville, a member of the Villeneuve Young Riders Club; and, Randy McGowan of Killam, a member of the Killam Light Horse Club.

Folton was also the top senior in the hippology contest, while Quaschnick earned the top intermediate award and the top junior was Renate Price of Calmar, a member of the Lakedel Light Horse Club. The top senior hippology team was Winder, Emily Hickman of Drayton Valley (Easy Riders 4-H club), Tyler Daniels of Lethbridge (Coaldale Equestrian Club) and Jonathon Lee of Lousana (Big Valley Outriders Club).

Taking first place in the team illustrated talk contests were the category one pair of Sara Andrews and Sabrina DeWitt, both of Nanton and members of the Stavely Stampeders, and the category two pair of Angie King and Avery Unruh both from Vauxhall and members of the Circle V Multi Club.

Top junior in the illustrated talk contest was Aimee Cook of Medicine Hat (Wild Rose 4-H Equestrian Club), top intermediate was Rae-Ann Dodd of Morrin (Big Valley Outriders) and top senior was Jennifer Morrell of Provost (Killam 4-H Light Horse Club).

In the horse bowl team final, Folton, Donna Reid of Brooks (Bow River Riders), Kristine Young of Evansburg (Pony Express), Nicole Ramsay of Brooks (Bow River Riders) took

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first place honours and Laura Hill of Red Deer (ShadowRiders), Marissa Longshore of Stettler (Big Valley Outriders), Jesse Schneider of Coronation (Coronation Range Riders), Chelsea Thiessen of Lethbridge (Lethbridge 4-H Light Horse) were runner up.

Print Marketing class winners were: junior, Hope Eaton of Oyen, a member of the Thundering Hooves 4-H Club; intermediate, Amy Smith of Clive, a member of the Blindman Light Horse; and senior, Melissa McNab of Stettler, a member of the Rainbow Riders.

The *2000 Provincial Horse Classic* was held at Olds College, August 2 to August 4, 2000. For more information, contact Wiegman in Edmonton at (780)422-4444. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 to connect to a RITE operator.

Contact: Henry Wiegman (780)422-4444

Lee Carothers (403)742-2676

4-H judging excellence rewarded

Despite a slight case of nerves and the challenge of having to rely on her memory instead of her notes, 18-year-old Jocelynne Gosling of Strathmore earned a trip to Denver after taking part in the 4-H Provincial Judging Competition, held August 11 and 12 in Olds.

"We judged for 12 hours yesterday," she said after the awards ceremony on August 13. "I knew I did well on my placings, but I wasn't so sure about my reasons, because this was my first time doing it all from memory. When we first gave the judges our reasons, I was shaking, but it got better as the day went on."

The competition gives 4-H members from across Alberta the chance to attend seminars and test their skills in judging a variety of livestock. The top 20 finishers at this program earned the right to attend other judging programs both in Canada and the United States.

"The 70 competitors at the fourteenth annual Provincial 4-H Judging Competition worked hard and improved their skills immensely," said Charles Schoening, provincial 4-H project event coordinator with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "The judging expertise displayed was of a very high calibre. This along with the exclusive sponsorship of Alberta Treasury Branches and the fine hospitality of the Olds Agricultural Society resulted in a successful event."

"Groups of 4-H members such as these exemplify why Alberta Treasury Branches continues to be a proud sponsor of 4-H in Alberta," said Janice Taylor of the of Alberta Treasury Branches.

Gosling, a member of the Irricana 4-H Beef Club, scored the highest point total during the two-day competition. This put her in the top spot as the best overall judge, and she was also top in placings. For her efforts, she won a trip to the Denver Western 4-H Round-up next January.

Three others from the top 20 finishers will join Gosling as part of the Alberta team at the Denver Western Round-up: Lindsey Mitchell (3rd) of the Kitscoty 4-H Beef Club, Martina Peake (4th) of the Duty Plains 4-H Club, and Erica Dolen (6th) of the Savanna 4-H Beef Club. There, they'll compete against 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) teams from across the U.S.

Katie Songer (5th) of the Rocky South 4-H Beef Club will also be travelling to Denver in January to the Denver National Western Stock Show, where she will represent Alberta in Denver as an ambassador of Alberta's 4-H program

Four other delegates will be travelling to Billings, Montana to compete in the Northern International Livestock Exhibition (NILE) in October. They are: Scott Richmond (7th) of the Rocky Mountain 4-H Club, Marla Foat (8th) of the Cremona 4-HClub, Trevor Hofstra (9th) of the Rollyview 4-H DairyClub and Ann-Marie Wiltzen (10th) of the Hoofbeats 4-H Club.

Another eight provincial contestants qualified to attend the Canadian Western Agribition and compete in its international 4-H judging seminar: Ashleigh Wray (2nd) of the Irricana 4-H Beef Club, Robyn Mader (15th) of the West Carstairs 4-H Beef Club, Mary Rutledge (16th) of the Greenshields 4-H Beef Club, Jill Stevens (17th) of the Mountain View Dairy Club, Rachelle Fisher (18th) of the West Didsbury Multi Club, Dana MacMillan (19th) of the Clandonald 4-H Beef Club, Melissa Snelgrove (20th) of the Vermillion 4-H HorseClub, and Tara Warburton (21st) of the Fort Macleod 4-H Multi Club.

Three contestants from the top 20 finishers will also attend the Calgary Stampede Livestock Evaluation School in Calgary June 2001. The recipients of these three trips were Shawna Ference (11th) of the Altario 4-H Beef Club, Kathleen Leitch (13th) of the Humble Ace of Clubs, and Lana Graham (14th) of the Three Rivers 4-H Judging Club.

Senior 4-H'ers qualify for this provincial contest through district and regional events. The provincial competition includes instructional and information clinics, after wich participants go on to judge 12 livestock classes made up of dairy cattle, beef cattle, light and heavy horses, swine and sheep conformation. Their evaluation includes oral reasons and a recall quiz to see how well they can remember the animals from 2 to 24 hours later.

This is the seventh consecutive year the provincial event was held in Olds in conjunction with the annual Mountain View County Fair.

For more information on joining 4-H call 422-4H4H, toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first.

Contact: Charles Schoening
(780)427-4462

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Honey production in Alberta

The Alberta 1999 Beekeepers' Survey Results have now been published by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Some of the highlights in the report include:

- the number of beekeepers in Alberta was 725, slightly less than the 730 in 1998
- however, producer numbers in Canada grew 3.4 per cent to 10,825 in 1999
- Alberta accounts for 6.6 per cent of the beekeepers in Canada and roughly 13 per cent of the western Canadian total of 5,387
- the estimated number of colonies in 1999 remained unchanged from 1998, at 205,000
- Alberta continues to account for slightly over one-third of the honey producing colonies in Canada
- honey production in Alberta was significantly down in 1999, largely attributed to a cool, wet spring, followed by a hot, dry summer. Total production is estimated at 11,251 tonnes, about one-third lower than in 1998
- regionally in the province, honey production was the highest in the northwest region at 4,364 tonnes (38.8 per cent of the 1999 provincial production), followed by the Peace region with 3,346 tonnes (29.7 per cent of total), and then the northeast region with 2,034 tonnes (18.1 per cent). Central Alberta had the lowest production at 376 tonnes (3.3 per cent) while in southern Alberta 1,132 tonnes (10.1 per cent) was produced.
- the average colony in Alberta produced 55 kilograms of honey in 1999, about 35 per cent lower than in 1998

Copies of the Alberta 1999 Beekeepers' Survey Results are available from Alberta Agriculture, by contacting Reynold Jaipaul, livestock statistician with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, (780) 427-5376.

Agri-News

September 18, 2000

New beef course at the U of A

Animal Science 474 – ***Applied Beef Production*** is a new course being offered this semester at the University of Alberta. The three-month course was designed by three Alberta Agriculture beef specialists: Christoph Weder, Vermillion; Trevor Yurchak, Athabasca; and, Brad Fournier, beef program coordinator, Edmonton.

"The course was designed to incorporate as many people, and as large a team as possible," says Yurchuk. "This is a full term, full credit course that takes the students through the whole process, from cow/calf operations to fine dining. Along with the speakers and producer involvement, every lecture and lab has at least one of the three course developers present to help maintain continuity. Industry development and technical information transfer is part of our job, and teaching this course is an excellent way to deliver timely and necessary information to beef industry students."

"In Alberta's beef industry, a major contributing factor to the profitability and viability of individual operations is the ability to determine and analyze costs of production," says Weder. "Successful beef operators continually cite that the key to the industry is knowing costs of production. This is also one of the biggest challenges individual operators face – understanding the process involved in the analysis. One of the main objectives of the course is to help students acquire the ability to analyse the costs of production within the industry in a business and management focus, rather than in a production focus."

The course works on a team project process. The project uses Alberta Agriculture's ***CowProfits*** cost of production software. Factors worked into the project include expenses, revenue, machinery, buildings, inventory, labour, depreciation, grazing, winter feed and others. All data comes from income tax records, farm records, accountants and other reliable sources. Every cost incurred in keeping a cow for 365 days is addressed.

The end result of the project is based on the completeness of the collected data; how the data applies to industry accepted standards; thoroughness of analysis; and, written evaluation from the producer on the process, the student, the report and the usefulness of the recommendations. The course helps students and producers involved learn how to collect and analyse costs of production within a cow/calf operation. It also emphasizes the importance of these costs to profitability in the beef industry.

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"We are looking forward to the challenges presented by this course," adds Yurchak. One of the main objectives of the course is to help the students establish strong, diverse working networks within the North American beef industry. When these students leave the course in three months they will have built a network that usually takes years to build. There is terrific value in having a working network as they are necessary in the management and marketing aspects of the beef industry."

For further information on this course, contact Yurchak (780) 675-2252; Weder (780) 853-8104; or Fournier (780) 427-4544.

Contact: *Trevor Yurchak* *(780) 675-2252* *Christoph Weder* *(780) 853-8104*

Harvest timeliness

Timeliness of operations is a critical part of crop production at all stages of development. A lot of attention is paid to the losses that can occur if seeding, weed control or spraying for diseases is done at the wrong time. Farmers also know it is just as important to harvest at the right stage, too. Harvest timing requires more judgement as it's harder to pin-point an exact time to start.

"In western Canada, most annual crops are swathed and then combined," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Wetaskiwin. "Swathing stops further development of the plant and allows seeds to reach uniform moisture content. Swathing too early can result in an immature seed shrivelling up and yields being reduced. Swathing too late risks losing crop from shattering, neck breakage and early frost."

For cereals, the general recommendation is to swath when the majority of seeds reach the firm dough stage. That is when a kernel can be cut with a thumbnail without squeezing out a watery dough.

"For canola, it is normal to only consider the main stem when making the swathing decision," adds Hockridge. "It is ready to swath when the top third of the stem has firm, pliable green seeds, the middle third has about 10 per cent change in seed colour and most of the bottom third has seeds that have changed colour."

Judgement comes into practice for several reasons:

- crops seldom mature evenly across entire fields
- there are differences between varieties in resistance to shattering
- diseases or weather conditions change the amount of risk associated with early swathing

"This year, frost at the end of May thinned many canola stands," says Hockridge. "In recovering, plants put on more side branches making it necessary to consider more than the main stem."

Technology has added additional factors producers can consider into the equation when making harvesting decisions. Herbicides, or desiccants can be used pre-harvest to dry-down the crop or control weeds. Some are surface desiccants while others have a systemic action in the plant. Timing of application is important to avoid damaging the seed and maximize weed control. Follow the label directions to get the best results for the product being used.

"When crops change colour and begin to look ripe it means that the season is almost complete," concludes Hockridge. "However, you can't count on any crop until it's in the bin. Farmers still have decisions to make to get the most out of the crop. These decisions are also part of the process of preparing for next year's crop."

Contact: *Ron Hockridge* *(780) 361-1240*

Getting the word out on water quality

With hundreds of water samples collected each year and 53 laboratory tests conducted on each sample, the partners in the AESA Water Quality Monitoring Program have plenty of work just to analyse the data and communicate the results in annual technical reports. But, the partners are taking communications one step further. They're bringing the essential results to the people who can really use them – Alberta's farmers.

The monitoring program focuses on collecting accurate, representative water quality information for Alberta's small agricultural streams. Samples are collected at each monitoring site during both high and low stream flows, to ensure representative data for all periods of the year. The samples are tested for the various forms of phosphorus and nitrogen, fecal coliform and *E. coli* bacteria, and about 40 different pesticides. The program is long-term because water quality tends to be quite variable; data must be collected over a long period to detect trends.

The program is tracking changes in water quality in streams draining 23 small agricultural watersheds. A watershed, or drainage basin, is all the land that drains runoff to a point along a stream or a lake. Whatever happens in a watershed – agriculture, forestry, mining, urbanization or other activity – can affect water quality. The AESA Water Quality Monitoring Program focuses on agricultural concerns. The monitored watersheds were selected to represent differences in agricultural intensity as well as differences in runoff potential and ecoregions across Alberta.

"The intensity ranking is based on census data for fertilizer and agricultural chemical expenses, and manure production.

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The runoff potential ranking is based on natural characteristics such as soils and landforms," explains Sandra Cooke, a water quality specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "Ecoregions are areas ofsimilar soils, landforms and climate. Using an ecoregion-approach, allows us to draw comparisons between a monitored watershed and other watersheds with similar characteristics."

The AESA Water Quality Monitoring Program partners are Alberta Agriculture; Alberta Environment; Alberta Health and Wellness; and, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Association (PFRA)

The program is developing two innovative tools for communicating results to farmers to help farmers better protect water quality in their area. The first communications tool is a **watershed report card** describing the annual results for each stream. "The report card will provide a snapshot of the main findings for the year for the watershed," Cooke explains. "We're testing drafts of these report cards with farmers, to make sure we provide the information they need in a clear, understandable way."

Results from testing the draft report cards show that farmers are keenly interested in water quality and want information on how they can protect it. Information on a stream's water quality, including the aspects that require special attention, will give farmers in the watershed a direction for positive, proactive change.

The second tool is a water quality index. "The index is a way to communicate overall water quality," adds Cooke. "It is based on a mathematical formula that converts a lot of complex data on various water quality characteristics into an easy-to-understand score."

The index was developed by the program partners, based on an index used in British Columbia. The Alberta version has now been adopted as Canada's national water quality index.

"Practical information on water quality is vital in helping the agricultural industry to protect the water resource," Cooke says. "It's easy to get lost in the science, but it's also extremely important to keep the scientific integrity while communicating the key information."

The AESA Water Quality Monitoring Program is one component of the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) Program. Created in 1997, the AESA Program facilitates the development and adoption of environmentally sustainable management practices and technologies through research, extension and monitoring.

For more information, contact Cooke at (780) 427-3397 or e-mail <**sandra.cooke@gov.ab.ca**>.

Contact: Sandra Cooke
(780) 427-3397

Livestock feeders should be Fusarium aware

Livestock producers need to be aware of the possible risks of buying fusarium damaged grain.

"Fursarium head blight has been the most important cereal disease of the eastern Canadian prairies, eastern Canada, and the midwest US, causing millions of dollars in losses each year," says Lorraine Harrison, plant pathologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Grande Prairie. "Over the last few years, the causal agent for fusarium head blight (a cereal grain disease) has slowly moved westward. Current grain varieties have little to no resistance to fusarium, resulting in yield losses, lower grades, no malt barley production, and a reduced quality of feed and food produced from infected grain. Alberta is relatively fusarium free, but we need to keep it that way."

Although it is too early to be sure, conditions in some areas of the eastern prairies this summer appear to have been more conducive to fusarium problems than last year. Crop reports are mentioning fusarium showing up in some cereals in Manitoba.

"Livestock feeders and feed grain traders, without realizing it, may put future Alberta crops at risk," adds Harrison. "Transporting infected feed and seed may be one contributing factor to the introduction and further spread of the fusarium agent in Alberta. Although the levels in Alberta are still very low, prevention is the best cure. Growers can use various management strategies to minimize the risk of fusarium head blight. Feed grain buyers are advised to ask about the fusarium levels in the grain if they purchase from areas at risk."

Further information is available at:
<**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agdex/100/1006321.html**>
and <**http://www.cgc.ca/Information/fhb-e.htm**>

Information is also available by contacting a veterinarian or one of Alberta Agriculture's plant pathologists: Dr. Ieuan Evan (780) 422-0719; Lorraine Harrison (780) 354-5153; or, Dr. Kelly Turkington, plant pathologist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, (403) 782-8138

Contact: Lorraine Harrison
(780) 354-5153

Alberta research paper makes the grade

A research paper published by scientists from Crop Diversification Centre North, Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development, Edmonton, was one of the six papers nominated for the ***Outstanding Paper Award for 1999***.

The selection was made from all the papers published in American Journal of Potato Research by the Senior Editors of the journal and was announced at the 83rd Annual Meeting of the Potato Association of America, July 23 to 27, 2000, Colorado Springs, Colorado. The reference for the paper is, **Bains, P.S., V.S. Bisht, D.R. Lynch, L.R. Kawchuk and J.P. Helgeson. 1999. Identification of stem soft rot** (*Erwinia carotovora* subspecies *atroseptica*) **resistance in potato. American Journal of Potato Research 76:137-141**.

The research project yielding this paper was done in cooperation with scientists from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge, and University of Wisconsin, Madison. The project was funded by a direct research grant from Alberta Agricultural Research Institute.

"The potato industry of Alberta is expanding at a rapid pace due to the opening of two new french fry plants in southern Alberta," says Dr. Piara Bains, plant pathologist with Alberta Agriculture's Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN), Edmonton. "This years' provincial potato acreage will be almost twice what it was in 1998. Soft rot of stems and tubers of potato caused by any of the three soft rot Erwinias is an economically important disease worldwide."

Commercially effective bactericides do not exist for this disease. Development of potato cultivars resistant to Erwinias is considered to be the most effective method to reduce losses. In addition to 65 resistant or highly resistant clones of wild *Solanum* species (wild potato relatives), this study has identified three tuber soft rot-resistant clones that are also resistant to stem soft rot. The resistant clones identified in this study are being used to develop soft rot-resistant cultivars of potatoes at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Research Centre, Lethbridge.

Contact: Dr. Piara Bains
(780) 415-2302

A world of experiences at Nordegg camp

Taking part in a week-long course on the United Nation's role in international affairs may not be what every teenager would want to do during the summer, but 17-year-old Kira Sallis of Sexsmith said this was one of the best learning experiences she's had.

Sallis, a member of the Kleskun 4-H Multi-club, calls her time at the August 13 to 18 Seminar on the United Nations and International Relations as educational as it was enjoyable. "It was like really fun school," she says. "It was informative and everyone was excited to be there. This was just what I wanted."

Sallis and fellow 4-H member Adelle Peterson of Morrin were given the opportunity to attend this seminar after taking part in the Alberta 4-H Selections program last spring. Thanks to sponsorship from the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede, Sallis and Peterson were able to travel to the Goldeye Centre near Nordegg for a week of courses, discussions and meetings with diplomats from the UN and from Canadian Foreign Affairs & International Trade. Since she has her eye on a career in international relations, the program was an excellent introduction to what she can expect in the years to come. "It gave me the chance to talk to people and find out what degrees to get and where to apply. I'm very glad I went," she adds.

The seminar also gave participants the chance to examine an actual international situation and put their diplomacy skills to the test in a role-playing game. This year, they looked at the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo; participants broke into small groups representing various countries in the region and then debated various proposals in a mock UN Security Council meeting.

"That was interesting because not a lot of people around here know about Africa," says Peterson, a member of the Trochu Valley Riders and the Morrin 4-H Multi-club. "It was a good learning experience."

There was also time set aside for recreational activities, such as canoeing, swimming, hiking and campfires. However, while the rest of the province was experiencing warm temperatures, the participants at this seminar were high enough in the mountains to see some fairly cool days. "It was really cold. You'd wake up in the morning and there would be frost on the ground. And some people didn't bring anything but shorts with them," says Peterson.

This was just one of about a dozen educational trips awarded each year to approximately 60 of the province's top 4-H members at the Selections program. Other trips include interprovincial exchanges, citizenship seminars in Ottawa and 4-H congresses in California and Montana.

For more information on joining 4-H, call 422-4H4H (toll free in Alberta by dialling 310-0000, first) or visit the 4-H website at: **www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h**

Contact: Marguerite Stark
Provincial 4-H Programs Specialist
(403) 498-8510

Agri-News Briefs

Bull management

Once breeding season is over, most producers pull both young and mature bulls off the breeding pastures and place them in some nearby locations for storage. It's a tough time for some producers because it means these bulls need to be contained until the next year. Bulls can occasionally fight and wreck facilities, and some need extra care and attention. Proper management during the remainder of the year and the winter season can have major implications for the next year's breeding season. Nutrition is a given. Older, mature bulls can be pastured out with a good quality grass-legume mix with access to a mineral-salt mix. However, thin and younger bulls need more attention. Improving body condition on thinner bulls and increasing nutritional requirements for the long yearling and two year old bulls is needed. Extra protein and macro minerals, like phosphorus, need to be considered now. Bull facilities need to be assessed as well. Providing lots of room to graze and rest is very important. Bulls will fight, so it's important to reduce the likelihood that they can injure themselves The more the room the better. Adequate protection from extreme weather conditions will help prevent frostbite of the bull's scrotum. Plenty of clean bedding is needed to reduce the chances of frozen testicles. Producers who stress nutrition and ways to reduce bull injury, are probably on the right management track. For further information on nutritional requirements contact the local Alberta Agriculture beef specialist or Bill Grabowsky, beef specialist, Wetaskiwin (780) 361-1240.

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Agri-News

September 25, 2000

Be safe around electricity

Alberta Municipal Affairs' safety services division has released its statistics on electrical incidents for the past year. Not surprising, farm accidents involving electricity, especially high-wires, are at their highest during spring planting and fall harvesting.

Between April 1, 1999 and March 31, 2000, there were 31 incidents reported that specifically cite farm implements coming in contact with power lines. In addition to these incidents, there were other incidents that although not specifically identified as such could have been agriculture related. The report includes another 33 line contacts that cite simply equipment; 58 incidents involve trucks with raised boxes or high loads; nine excavating or earth moving vehicles; one grain bin relocation; five drilling and seismic equipment and six aircraft, parachutes, kite contacts. Since not all incident occurrences are reported, this information serves only as an approximation of the total number of incidents and provides examples of the type of accidents that occurred and the machinery involved.

"When Alberta farmers are using equipment such as tractors, grain trucks, grain augers and bale elevators, the chance of coming in contact with high voltage overhead electric wires increases," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, head of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm safety program, Edmonton. "The main message we try to get out to farmers is that electrical contact incidents are preventable. A little extra care and attention is all that's needed, but so often during this busy time of year, little things get forgotten. Unfortunately, those overhead wires are deadly."

Mike Gardner, utility coordinator with Municipal Affairs, Edmonton, says, "When a farm machine comes into contact with overhead wires, it may not be the familiar 220 domestic voltage running through those wires, it is most often 14,000 volts. Contact with that level of electrical power can cause severe damage. Grain bins placed close to powerlines may seem like a space saving method, but remember that the utmost care must be used when maneuvering close to those lines and power poles. Also, the induction field associated with high voltage wires can cause a grounded object, such as a grain bin, to be electrically charged, especially the metal portions of the bin."

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When operating or moving machinery, make sure you know where all the overhead wires are. It may take a little more time but it will save lives.

"The overhead wires aren't the only electrical contact that can result in a serious incident," continues Gardner. "When dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call the power company. Pole guywires are grounded to the neutral. When one of the guywires is broken, it can cause an electric current disruption. This can make those neutral wires anything but harmless. If you hit a guywire and break it, call the electric company to fix it. Don't do it yourself."

"We want Alberta farmers and farm workers to remember that the hazard will always be there. The main preventative safety measure that can be taken is to be aware of the hazard, respect it and avoid contact with it," adds Kyeremanteng.

Power companies can be contacted for safety procedure information. The Alberta Electrical and Communications Utility Safety Association also provides safety information and conducts safety seminars. For further information on the Association, contact Don Watt at (780) 962-2194.

The theme for Alberta Agriculture's farm safety program is ***A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow***. Be careful, work safe, be safe!

Contact:	*Solomon Kyeremanteng* *(780) 427-4227*	*Mike Gardner* *(780) 415-0480*

No confusion about rats

Late summer and early fall is when many rodents are on the move, seeking a new home and winter quarters. It is also a time when the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development receives the greatest number of reported suspect rat sightings. Reported 'rat' sightings vary from rodents seen crossing country roadways to scampering about on shopping mall parking lots. Almost all sightings turn out to be other rodents.

"Misidentifying rats happens for many reasons, but mostly because young muskrats, pocket gophers, ground squirrels and mice are usually seen for the first time by people suspecting they must be rats," says John Bourne, vertebrate pest specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Vermilion. "The locations and circumstances under which these rodents are observed plays a big role in their misidentification. For instance, a rat-like creature crossing a busy downtown street in broad daylight does not seem like something a muskrat would do. Nor does a furry, long-tailed animal scurrying under the vehicle when the garage door is opened seem normal for any rodent. But the truth is, these are normal activities and behaviours for rodents at this time of year."

Offspring born in the spring and summer are seeking new territories to establish and these naive young animals often find themselves in the most peculiar and unusual surroundings. For the most part, they are not sick or injured, but are simply exploring new territory in which to look for a mate and produce a family the following spring. As a result of leaving the family unit in search of greener pastures, most young rodents meet an early demise due to predation, starvation or misadventure.

"In spite of the similarities common to all small rodents, there are many great differences between our native rodents and Norway rats," adds Bourne. "The most distinguishing feature of a Norway rat is its cylindrical or rope-like tail that is nearly as long as its six to eight inch body. The tail is covered with short bristly hairs and, upon close inspection, has scale rings around the tail from base to tip."

Another major feature is the colour of the animal. The underbelly is whitish or buff and the side and back are distinctly tan or brownish with black hairs throughout. The hair is short with no undercoat or guard hairs. Rats also have several long facial whiskers. The front and hind feet are small, fine or delicate, and pinkish in colour. Small claws are of similar colour.

"Norway rat droppings are unique, too," says Bourne. "They are about the size and shape of an olive pit, about 1/2 to 3/4 inch long. They are black in colour and blunt at both ends. Older droppings fade and turn a greyish colour within a few months. An adult male Norway rat may weight one pound (500 gm). Females weight slightly less."

The most important steps to take in reporting a suspicious rodent, that could be a rat, are to contact an Alberta Agriculture office as soon as possible and preserve as much evidence as possible, including animal remains, droppings and the like.

Albertans can also call Bourne directly, toll free by dialling 310-0000 and then 853-8225.

Contact:	*John Bourne* *(780) 853-8225*

New Alberta agri-tourism directory hits the web!

Agri-tourism is a relatively new and growing sector, marrying two of Alberta's largest industries - agriculture and tourism. An increased interest in fresh, nutritious foods; a desire to revive that link back to our farming roots; and, a fascination with the nostalgia of farming and our rural communities has given rise to this new and emerging agricultural scene.

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"This new agriculture is more consumer focused as it is closely linked to the demands, needs and interests of today's consumers," says Sharon Homeniuk, rural development specialist-business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Stony Plain. "Agri-tourism is value-added agriculture, farm direct marketing and a valuable educational tool."

What does Alberta have to offer the consumer in terms of agri-tourism based experiences? Lots! Almost 200 agri-tourism farm-based businesses are currently listed on the new **Alberta Agri-tourism Directory**. The directory is available via the internet on Alberta Agriculture's website <**http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/general/agritour.nsf**>.

"Farmers' Markets, market gardens, farm stores, garden centres and greenhouses are just some of what the horticulture sector contributes to agri-tourism," adds Homeniuk. "There are also farms offering country vacations, farm tours, farm festivals, farm-fresh products and other activities such as horse back riding, u-fish ponds, hiking trails, educational activities and school tours."

The directory acts as a partnership roster, allowing agri-tourism business owners to search out other operators to partner and market with. It also allows tour companies to see what's available for agricultural tours. The information is also being used by Travel Alberta for their 1-800 operators and Visitor Information Centres. In addition, some of the information found on the website is being added to Alberta Agriculture's new Agricultural Fairs and Rural Tourism publication.

For more information on the **Alberta Agri-tourism Directory** and other agri-tourism related initiatives, call Homeniuk, at (780) 963-6101 (toll-free via 310-0000) or e-mail at <**sharon.homeniuk@gov.ab.ca**>.

Contact: *Sharon Homeniuk*
(780) 963-6101

Environmental issues focus of Farm Writers' conference

The Alberta Farm Writers Association is hosting this years Canadian Farm Writers Federation (CFWF) annual meeting and conference. Agricultural writers and broadcasters from across Canada will be in Lethbridge from September 28 to October 1, 2000, attending the conference and participating in tours of southern Alberta.

The theme, *Farming on the Green Planet – The New Age of Stewardship* sets the tone for weekend discussions on important environmental issues facing today's agri-food production industries.

Day-long tours scheduled for Friday will give delegates a first-hand look a wide range of topics, such as wind power, organic ranching, endangered wildlife management, the impact of irrigation, manure composting, food processing and adding value to primary agriculture products.

"Southern Alberta really is a microcosm of Canadian food production," says Clare Stanfield, conference chair and an Alberta member of CFWF. "The region features dryland grain production, intensive livestock operations, irrigation, special crops and a growing number of world-class food processing facilities. What happens here in terms of how agriculture industry deals with emerging environmental issues has implications for farming regions right across Canada."

Saturday's program includes a keynote presentation, *Communicating the Science* by Bob McDonald, the acclaimed science broadcaster and host of CBC Radio's science show, *Quirks and Quarks*.

"Never has science been so integrated into so many aspects of our lives and never has the public been so mistrustful of scientists. It's up to journalists to clarify the boundaries between fact, fiction and fantasy," says McDonald, 25-year veteran of science reporting.

The balance of Saturday's program zeros in on two critical topics: water quality and availability (including a discussion of public health issues around water) and the myths and realities surrounding carbon sequestration.

Single tickets for Saturday's conference are available for $40, including lunch. For further information, call (403) 382-7173 or (403) 329-2244 or visit the conference website at <**cfwf2000@uleth.ca/**>

Contact: *Clare Stanfield*
(403) 299-2685
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Wheat stem sawfly

Wheat stem sawfly is native to North America and lives in grasses, mostly the wheatgrasses, Agropyron. Cultivated hosts include wheat, rye, triticale and some varieties of barley.

"Within the wheats, spring wheat is most heavily attacked in Alberta, with winter wheat becoming a potential host in Alberta only within the last few years," says Jim Jones, entomologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "In Montana, winter wheat has been severely infested and is perhaps the major host there. Winter wheat is occasionally attacked in southern Alberta. The old varieties of durum wheat were resistant to wheat stem sawfly, but some new varieties are susceptible. Oats and broad-leaved crops are immune."

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Female wasps lay eggs in barley, but the larvae don't live long enough to cause yield losses. Plant age is important because plants that have not reached the jointing (stem elongation) stage are not acceptable to females. Similarly, plants in the boot stage are immune to sawfly attack.

The sawfly larva feeds within the stem and burrows down to or below ground level by the time the wheat heads begin to ripen. It then turns around, head upwards, and cuts through the stem about two centimetres above the ground, seals the end above itself, spins a cocoon in the stem and passes the winter as a larva in diapause (hibernation).

"Overwintering larvae pupate within their cocoons in May and adults begin to emerge in early June," explains Jones. "As is common for many insects, males start to emerge first followed within a few days by females. A study in northern Montana showed peak male emergence occurred about June 15 and peak female emergence about June 25. Sawflies are rather inactive insects that drift from plant to plant and spend most of their time resting on grass stems. The wheat stem sawfly has only one generation per year."

There are nine known parasites of wheat stem sawfly, but only one species provides significant control. *Bracon cephi*, a native braconid wasp, is one of the few insect parasites that can move from grass to crops with the sawfly. When weather conditions delay crop maturation and sawfly larval development, *B. cephi* can produce another generation, thus extending its control of the wheat stem sawfly population. *Bracon lisogaster*, a close relative of *B. cephi*, attacks sawfly larvae in the stems of grasses. It can significantly control wheat stem sawfly on native grasslands and roadsides.

"Viruses cause disease in the wheat stem sawfly and at times are an important natural control agent," adds Jones. "Certain viruses are registered biocontrol agents in Canada for use on a limited number of pests (red-headed pine sawfly and douglas-fir tussock moth)."

Sawflies are plant-eaters. The wheat stem sawfly is best known as a pest of wheat and has caused extensive losses to wheat in the northern Great Plains. Its history in Canada dates from 1895, when it damaged wheat near Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and Souris, Manitoba. The wheat stem sawfly was slow to adapt to cereals, but achieved pest status in the 1910s and 20s.

"The greatest losses occur around the margins of fields," says Jones. "Wheat stem sawfly losses are of two types. Larvae feed within the stem of the plant and reduce yield, by five to 15 per cent in total seed weight, and quality through reduced protein and kernel weight. Larvae cut stems causing stems to break in the wind, fall to the ground and become unharvestable. The effects of feeding by larvae usually go unnoticed until the plants are toppled by wind and the weight of maturing heads. Mature larvae chew part way through and all around the inside of the stem just before cocoon formation in late summer."

Sampling and monitoring of crops to determine the percentage of plants cut by sawfly per square metre prior to harvest, is recommended. Control methods are required if 10 to 15 per cent of the crop in the previous year was cut by sawfly.

"Most fluctuations in populations are caused indirectly by weather," says Jones. "The effects of rainfall or drought on the primary food plants (grasses) are important to determining the size of infestations in the secondary food plants (cereals). When the weather is rainy in the fall or spring, the numbers of large, head-bearing stems of native grasses are adequate for sawfly populations. But when there is a drought, the numbers of grass stems suitable for attack are few and the sawfly concentrates its attack on wheat instead of on grasses. Since only one sawfly will emerge per stem, a shortage of suitable oviposition sites results in higher mortality due to cannibalism. When rain promotes an abundance of suitable stems, the proportion of stems receiving more than one egg is low and sawfly populations increase. During warm, sunny, windless weather, and especially after rain, the sawflies disperse widely. Their attack is otherwise concentrated near the field margins in fewer plants."

Drought conditions can reduce infestations the following year by killing plants that have larvae inside them. Drought in the spring can cause overwintered larvae to re-enter diapause but the influence of this on population size is not clear. Abundant rainfall tends to produce outbreaks of stem rust disease, which is harmful to sawfly larvae. In one instance only 18 per cent of larvae survived in heavily rusted wheat. A population decline in 1955 was attributed to high rainfall and severe rust infestations that killed the larvae in 1954.

Populations build up and damage often occurs at field edges where suitable grass and crop hosts coincide. The wheat stem sawfly is a weak flier and will not take flight readily during cool, rainy or windy weather. Sunny calm weather during the egg-laying period promotes the dispersal of the wheat stem sawfly.

Weather also affects populations of the parasite, Bracon cephi. The parasites are inactive when the grass or crop is wet, but become active when conditions are drier.

Contact: *Jim Jones*
(780) 422-0879

Practices to reduce sawfly damage

A number of practices reduce losses caused by wheat stem sawfly. More than any other practice, the use of resistant varieties has reduced sawfly damage.

"Sawfly populations have increased in recent years, perhaps because of a neglect, or reluctance, to use resistant varieties; a decline in resistance properties of the new varieties; or, the tendency to use fewer tillage operations," says Jim Jones, entomologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "A resurgence in sawfly populations recently led to losses estimated at over $5 million in 1990."

Some practices that can help control sawfly populations include:

Using resistant varieties – Lethbridge Research Station has maintained a 'sawfly nursery' for a number of years and since 1987 has evaluated wheat varieties for resistance to wheat stem sawfly. Two sawfly resistant varieties of hard red spring wheat, Lancer and Leader, are currently registered in Canada. Resistance to wheat stem sawfly is closely related to stem solidness and all resistant wheat varieties have solid or semi-solid stems.

Crop rotation – Plant crops that are immune or resistant to wheat stem sawfly. Flax and durum acreage increased after farmers used flax to clear land of sawfly infestations. Durum varieties planted now for sawfly control should have sawfly resistance. Oats is virtually immune to wheat stem sawfly. Larvae rarely survive in barley.

Trap crops – A permanent trap crop of smooth bromegrass around a field will reduce the number of larvae that survive in ditches and headlands. Plants that attract adults are used to collect a sizeable portion of the population. Some control measure is then used to destroy the insects. Susceptible varieties may be used as a trap strip provided the plants are harvested, mowed or cultivated before the larvae move to the base of the plant (before mid-July). Resistant varieties or non-host plants such as oats, bromegrass, flax or other broad-leaved crop may be used because females do not fly far from their site of emergence.

Delayed seeding – Delayed seeding in spring produces a crop that is unattractive to females at egg laying time. Late maturing varieties allow production of two generations of parasites, which results in fewer sawflies the following year.

Summer fallow – Summer fallow infested stubble and then cultivate in early June to bury pupating adults.

Tillage – Shallow tillage in fall increases larval mortality. Deep tillage buries overwintering larvae and reduces adult emergence dramatically but may not be practical because of the potential for soil erosion.

Burning – Burning infested stubble may reduce sawfly numbers but it also greatly reduces parasite numbers and the benefits of returning stubble to the soil. In view of other cultural control options available, burning is not recommended.

Conservation tillage – Continuous cropping of susceptible crops and reduced tillage improve larval survival and therefore increase the risk of infestation. Tillage in late fall and spring reduces sawfly populations harbored in stubble. The less the soil is disturbed, the more sawflies will emerge from the stubble. Conservation tillage and wheat stem sawfly management appears to be incompatible, but producers might consider the benefits of moldboard plowing of small, heavily infested parts of fields.

Swathing – Swath sawfly infested wheat as soon as kernel moisture drops below 40 per cent to save infested stems before they fall.

Delayed planting – Research from Montana indicates that if planting is delayed until May 20th, damage is significantly reduced compared to earlier planting. Yield and quality may suffer if planting is delayed. Accordingly, Montana recommends delayed planting only when sawfly infestation risk is high and a susceptible variety is grown.

Early harvest – Harvest early before sawfly damage occurs and preferably before larvae have moved below the cutting height. Cutting for forage or silage are options. Some standard varieties of wheat may yield better than others when harvested early.

Avoid harmful practices – Do not re-crop infested stubble. Use an alternative crop. Summer fallow badly infested parts of fields. Cultivate summer fallow in early June before adults emerge. Do not plant a susceptible crop on or adjacent to land that was infested in the previous year.

Biological control – parasitic insects are an important regulator of sawfly populations. Reductions in infestations have been attributed to heavy parasitism in the same or in the immediately preceding years.

"Initially, sawflies in grain fields were apparently free of parasites; over time, the number of parasitized sawflies gradually increased," adds Jones. "Different parasite species vary in their effects on sawfly populations, depending on whether the infested host plant is in a native or cultivated habitat. One parasite, *B. lisogaster*, prefers larvae in grasses over cereals."

Contact: *Jim Jones*
(780) 422-0879

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Agri-News Briefs

Advisory from Alberta Farm Implement Act Administration

National Tractor (both the dealer and distributor) have concluded business effective January 29, 1999. Statutory warranty, as provided by the *Alberta Farm Implement Act*, has expired. Any statutory warranty concerns that have not been addressed by National Tractor should be registered, if not already done. For more information, contact Dennis J. Budney, inspector, at the Alberta Farm Implement Act Administration Office, #305, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Budney can also be reached by phone at (780) 427-2188. All Alberta government numbers are toll free within Alberta by dialling 310-0000 first.

Watershed workshop

The workshop ***Living and Working in Watersheds – Tools for Community Based Action*** is being held at the Westerner in Red Deer on November 1 and 2, 2000. The focus of the workshop is to provide watershed community development information and direction to established and newly formed watershed groups, stakeholders, agricultural and environmental agency staff and the Alberta public. Topics covered include: *What is a Watershed?; Why Form a Watershed Group?; Fundraising and Marketing; Riparian Health; Range Health; Pine Lake Success Story;* and, *Land Care Australia*. The session, *Ten Lessons Learned*, explores the lessons learned by successful watershed groups and provides practical examples of management options and on-the-ground tools that can be used in watershed and community based actions. For further information, a full agenda for the workshop and on-line registration, visit the Alberta Watersheds website at <**http://www.albertawatersheds.org**>. Workshop and registration information are also available by calling (403) 782-3301 in Red Deer or by calling toll free 1-800-387-6030.

Agri-News

October 2, 2000

Time to buy that turkey!

Thanksgiving is a celebration steeped in a tradition of families coming together and sharing the harvest abundance. Whether the family opts for the traditional Alberta turkey, or chooses roast beef, bison, pork, chicken, ostrich or rhea, it's the celebration that counts.

"Buying a turkey is one of the fun activities at thanksgiving time," says Linda St. Onge, food scientist and nutritionist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Leduc. "Turkey can be purchased frozen or fresh, whole or in part, pre-seasoned, pre-basted or pre-stuffed."

Turkeys are graded by appearance. Grade A denotes the highest quality birds free from physical defects. Birds with discolouration, tears in the skin or a missing wing are graded Utility. Nutrition is not affected.

If you buy a frozen turkey, leave the original wrapping on and thaw it out in the refrigerator. Depending on size, it will take several days, so plan accordingly. If you don't have enough refrigerator space, use the cold-water thawing method, or a large insulated picnic hamper. To avoid food-borne illness, it's important to keep the thawed portion cold while the inner portion of the turkey is still thawing out. Cook a thawed or fresh turkey within a day or two.

"Pre-basted turkeys have had fat injected under the skin. During cooking the fat melts and 'bastes' the turkey," adds St. Onge. "Consumers pay a higher price for pre-basted turkeys that have that added hydrogenated or saturated fat added. While moist turkey is the goal of all holiday cooks, it is just as easy to wrap a few strips of bacon around the drumsticks and lay a few strips across the breast. Or you can decide to find the turkey baster and take the time to baste the bird by hand. Be careful around the hot oven and remember that there can be a lot of steam building up in a covered roasting pan. Lift the lid carefully."

Overcooking will dry out your turkey. A large 22-pound bird (10 kg) with stuffing needs about 4 1/2 hours at 325 degrees F. - less time than most people think it takes. If you don't have a meat thermometer, this is a good time to get one; they cost only a few dollars. Insert the thermometer into the inner thigh and cook to 180 degrees F. for a stuffed bird.

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The Alberta Turkey Producers (ATP) have produced a brochure ***Roasting Alberta Turkey*** and are offering it free of charge. The brochure provides simple instructions on preparing a golden brown, ready to carve, mouth-watering turkey. To receive a copy, contact the Alberta Turkey Producers at 212, 8711A - 50 Street, Edmonton, AB T6B 1E7, phone (780) 465-5755 or e-mail <info@abturkey.ab.ca>.

Contact: Linda St. Onge *Janice Shields (ATP)*
(780) 980-4873 *(780) 465-5755*

Processing industry works to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Greenhouse gases trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere. This natural process keeps the planet warm enough to be hospitable to life. However, modern industry and lifestyles have increased greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the Earth's atmosphere over the last century. The majority of scientists studying this issue believe that these increasing concentrations are contributing to global warming. Global warming could result in such problems as more severe weather events like tornadoes, droughts and winter storms, more forest fires, and damage to water resources.

"Under an international agreement called the *Kyoto Protocol*, Canada has committed to reduce the nation's GHG emissions to six per cent below 1990 levels by 2008 to 2012," says Dave Ritchie, development officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "Since 1990, Canada's emissions have grown, making the reduction target more distant. The national and provincial processes to address Canada's commitment have indicated that all Canadians, whether corporate or individuals, will be expected to contribute to reducing emissions."

Recent surveys show that the GHG issue is also a concern to consumers. Most consumers in Canada and abroad feel that action has to be taken now on emissions.

"The Canadian agri-food processing industry accounts for about 3.3 per cent of the GHG emissions from all Canadian manufacturing. That's less than one per cent of total Canadian GHG emissions," says Ritchie. "In addition to addressing the concerns of consumers and government, the agri-food processing industry has an immediate economic stake in reducing its input costs. Reducing the industry's GHG emissions can reduce input costs."

In 1997, the industry's GHG emissions were about six million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents. Gas concentrations are often given in carbon dioxide equivalents because each gas has its own potency in terms of greenhouse warming potential.

Sources of the industry's GHG emissions include energy use, refrigeration and organic wastes. Energy use is the leading source (about 80 per cent), followed by organic wastes (12 per cent) and refrigerants. Carbon dioxide is the main GHG emitted by the industry.

Based on traditional annual growth rates, by 2010 the total GHG emissions from the Canadian agri-food processing industry are expected to grow to 6.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents, 17 per cent higher than 1990 emissions levels.

"Alberta is currently the third largest food and beverage processing province in Canada, contributing 13 per cent of national shipments," adds Ritchie. "In recent years, the industry has shown strong growth, with the value of its manufacturing shipments approaching $8 billion."

Alberta's agri-food processing emissions from fossil fuel use increased by 17 per cent between 1990 and 1996, from 0.6 to 0.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents. Assuming continued strong growth of the industry over the next decade, its emissions from fossil fuel use are projected to increase by 243 per cent, to 2.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents, from 1996 levels, by 2008-12.

"Energy management practices such as Process Integration (streamlining factory processes) and Energy Management and Control Systems (computerizing these systems) can significantly reduce energy consumption," says Ritchie. "Reduced energy consumption means lower input costs for the industry and that translates directly into reduced GHG emissions and increased business profits."

A recent study by the Alberta Food Processors Association (AFPA), called Increasing Business Profit$ by Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions, identifies potential opportunities to reduce emissions. Examples of these options and the range of potential cost savings include:

- energy-efficient boilers – 5 to 15% savings
- building envelope – 30 to 60% savings
- chilling and freezing – 10 to 30% savings
- compressed air – 10 to 40% savings
- energy-efficient motors v 3 to 10% savings
- heating, ventilation and air conditioning – 10 to 40% savings
- energy-efficient lighting – 20 to 60% savings
- process energy – 10 to 50% savings
- product storage – 15 to 60% savings
- transportation – 10 to 40% savings

Accelerated adoption of energy-efficient practices is important for the industry, both economically and environmentally. However, each processing facility will need a detailed energy audit to identify which specific options are feasible for that

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particular facility. Widespread adoption of energy saving practices would make a significant contribution to helping the industry reduce its GHG emissions to 1990 levels.

AFPA is currently developing an energy audit pilot project to demonstrate that a 25 per cent reduction in GHG emissions for small to mid-size companies is achievable and economically feasible. More information on the pilot project and on options to reduce energy consumption is available from AFPA by calling (780) 444-2272.

Contact: Dave Ritchie
(780) 422-2556

Hemp and oilseed fibre separation and production

On September 12, 2000, Dr. Christian Furll from the Agricultural Engineering Research Institute in Potsdam-Bornim, Germany, presented a seminar on hemp harvesting and processing equipment for hemp stalks and oilseed flax straw to Alberta engineers, oilseed specialists and producers at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Agricultural Value-added Engineering Centre (AVEC) in Edmonton.

"Alberta has been test growing low THC varieties of hemp for the past few years," says Curtis Weeks, cereal and oilseed specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Coronation. "Harvesting is the trickiest and most difficult part of the production process. It was very interesting hearing about the harvesting and processing technology developed in Germany. Some of their techniques could certainly help the development of the Alberta hemp industry."

Since 1996, it has again been possible to plant low THC varieties of hemp in Germany. The fibres produced from hemp will in future be processed into building and insulating materials and substitute for expensive glass fibres, and possibly carbon fibres as well, in high-quality composite materials.

"While the processes of growing and harvesting can be looked upon as solved, there are problems with the fibre separation," says Furll. "The facilities currently available require too high of an investment and do not operate reliably. This leads to unjustifiable fibre costs."

Potsdam-Bornim has a new working principle for fibre separation, developed, studied and patent-applied for by the Institute for Agrotechnology. It is based on the principle of impact stress.

First the precut hemp stalks are supplied to the machine as loose material. Rapidly circulating strip steel beaters crush the pithy components of the hemp plant, also known as shives or hurds, and knock them off the fibres. The fibres themselves remain intact. A large part of the shives accumulating during the crushing process are radially discharged into the lower half of the grinding chamber by straining through a screen and removed separately. Above the screen, the fibres are transported axially and remain unbroken and in energy-saving process in the grinding chamber.

"A test plant has been constructed," adds Furll. "It consists of the grinding chamber, which contains the rotor with the beaters, the material feeder and the fibre and shives discharge. A number of groups of flat strip steel beaters are arranged next to one another on a long rotor shaft. The grinding chamber is enclosed on the bottom with a screen."

The degree of separation for the shives in the grinding chamber is fundamentally influenced by the screen parameters hole form and size as well as hole orientation and screen flank. Screens with oblong holes and high screen flank are best. Guide elements and passive impact elements are fixed to the grinding chamber cover. These effect an additional crushing of the material. The roof baffle plate basically has a guide function. The crushing takes place in the case of the baffle board primarily through shear load and for the ledger plate through bending strain.

Achievable straw throughput depends on the size of the rotor. Two to three tonnes per hour are possible. With the correct selection of machine parameters, more than half of the shives are removed and less than five per cent of total fibre is misdirected into the shives flow.

The fibre production is controllable via the beater rotor speed. In this way, it is possible to adapt to different quality raw materials as regards moisture and degree of retting. The shives still in the fibres can be easily separated.

"Complete fibre production can be achieved simply with one machine," says Furll. "This process replaces the three machines which are now used in practical facilities. Fibre production is independent of the degree of retting and also achieved with higher material moisture. The costs of fibre cleaning are reduced through the shives removal that takes place during fibre production. The investment costs for fibre production are about half and fibre costs are reduced from more than 1 DM/kg to approx. 0.70 DM/kg."

For further information on low THC hemp production in Alberta, contact Weeks at (403) 578-3970.

Contact: Curtis Weeks
(403) 578-3970

Heavy harrows – a direct seeding tool

Chaff and straw, collectively known as residue, not managed properly can create difficult conditions for direct seeding next spring.

"Residue, needs to be spread wide and evenly over the width of cut, to avoid seeding problems next spring such as hair pinning with disc type openers, and plugging between the shanks of air seeders and drills," says Mark Olson, pulse and special crops specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lacombe. "Experienced direct seeders will often state that residue management begins and ends at the combine. Heavy harrows used in conjunction with chaff and straw spreaders on the combine can create an ideal environment for direct seeding."

Inexperienced direct seeders often believe that the heavy harrows will solve all of their residue problems. heavy harrows can be a very effective or ineffective tool depending on the environmental conditions. When used at high speeds (10 to 12 mph) under hot, dry conditions the heavy harrow can help spread crop residues, especially straw. Heavy harrows will not move chaff rows very far and this is why a chaff spreader on the combine is highly recommended.

"A number of farmers have said moving chaff under damp conditions is possible but, it is a high risk operation because heavy harrowing under damp conditions can result in piles of dirt and straw mixed together – the "muskrat house" effect as some farmers call them," says Olson.

When it comes to the best time of year to heavy harrow, most farmers lean towards the fall, since getting the optimal environmental conditions, hot and dry, is more likely. However, don't rule out heavy harrowing in the spring if the conditions are right.

"The one thing about heavy harrows is one does have to experiment with them a bit," adds Olson. "It takes some practice to get the feel for adjusting tine angle and downwardpressures under different weather conditions to see whether it's working or not. In the spring, the straw will have partly rotted which can be good or bad depending on your view. Some farmers suggest the straw breaks up more in the spring and the heavy harrows do a better job. Other farmers say that the stubble becomes unanchored leading to plugging problems when seeding."

As for tractor requirements, the heavy harrow can take a lot of horsepower requirements, especially if set aggressively. It is not uncommon for 50 feet of heavy harrow to require 150 to 250 hp, or three to five hp/foot of harrow, depending on how it is set and the conditions.

A list of heavy harrows on the market may be found below. Prices are based on local dealers quotes near Edmonton and are not dealer recommendations. While this may not be a fully comprehensive list all the heavy harrows on the market, it will give you an introductory view. Check with your local farm machinery dealers on which brand names are being carried. Costs (f.o.b.) are quoted on a 50-foot set of heavy harrows unless otherwise indicated.

Brand Name	Location	Widths	Warranty	Comments
Degelman Selmac Sales Box 3099 Stony Plain, Alberta T7Z 1Z1 Ron Goerz (780) 963-2251	$17,000 to $20,000 depending on options	StrawMaster 30', 50' and 70'	1 year	9/16" or 5/8"diameter x 26" high carbide tines. Hydraulic lift and hydraulic tine angle adjustment. Manual downward pressure adjustment.
Flexicoil Selmac Sales Box 3099 Stony Plain, Alberta T7Z 1Z1 Ron Goerz (780) 963-2251	$17,000 to $20,000 depending on options	Flexicoil 85 30', 50' and 70'	1 year	9/16" diameter x 26" high carbide tines. Hydraulic lift and manual tine angle and downward pressure adjustment. Kits now available for hydraulic tine angle adjustment.

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Brand Name	Location	Widths	Warranty	Comments
Riteway DCD Industries 5735 - 103 Street Edmonton, Alberta T6H 2H3 Bob Able (780) 435-4815	$20,000 to $26,000 depending on options	Model 6000 34', 46', 58' and 70' Model 7000 28', 40', 50' and 62' Model 8000 33', 45', 55', 68' and 77'	1 year parts and workmanship	9/16" diameter x 26" tine except for 7000 model series which is 3/8" diameter x 16" tine. Hydraulic lift and hydraulic tine angle adjustment. Larger 5/8" diameter tine option available.
Morris Vegreville Implements 6138 - 50 Avenue Vegreville, Alberta T9C 1W6 Ralph Soldan (780) 632-2514	$22,000 ($17,500 cash price)	Field Pro 50' and 70'	1 year	1/2" diameter x 27 1/4"straight tines. Hydraulic lift and manual tine angle and downward pressure adjustment. 6 pairs of tines per 10' section compared to 5 pairs on other makes.
Brandt Parkland Equipment 324 Boulder Boulevard Stony Plain, Alberta T7Z 1V7 Henry George (780) 963-7411	$22, 600 (plus delivery cost and set up)	Commandeur 40', 50' and 70'	2 year	9/16"diameter x 26" tine or 5/8" diameter x 28" tine. Hydraulic lift with option of hydraulic or mechanical tine angle adjustment. Manual downward pressure adjustment. Ground clearance from ground to middle frame 22"; wings 28". Parallel link system.
Bourgault Thorsby Farm Center Box 229 Thorsby, Alberta T0C 2P0 John George (780) 789-3989	Price for 48' $27,000 to $36,000 retail and dependent on options	48', 60', 72, 84'	1 year	9/16" diameter x 26' tine with 5/8" diameter option. Hydraulic lift, hydraulic tine angle adjustment, and hydraulic down pressure adjustment all standard equipment.
Bergen Grainline Implements Box 360 Killam, Alberta T0B 2L0 Rick Franke (780) 385-2423	Price for 48' $17,995 retail	36', 48', 60', 72', 84'	1 year	1/2" diameter tine x 20". Hydraulic lift and hydraulic cable lock. Self-levelling harrow bar feature.

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the author and his employer Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development do not accept responsibility for errors and omissions.

Contact: *Mark Olson*
(780) 986-8985

Use common sense when storing vegetables over winter

Alberta's climate in winter is so cold that it is necessary to store home-grown vegetables indoors over the winter.

"Many of the vegetables grown outdoors in the garden in summer make excellent candidates for storage," says Jim Holley, post-harvest scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South (CDCS), Brooks. "Their color, crispness and flavor can successfully be preserved for long periods of time if they are stored in the proper set of conditions."

Vegetables that are suitable for storage can be separated into four main categories, those that require:

- cold humid conditions (beets, carrots, parsnips and turnips)
- cool humid conditions (potatoes)
- cool dry conditions (squash and pumpkins), or
- cold dry conditions (onions)

"The homeowner rarely has access to more than one storage facility at a time, so storing a wide range of home grown vegetables can be a problem," adds Holley. "The optimum temperature for storing potatoes is five to eight degrees Celsius, while carrots store best at one degree C. Carrots and potatoes lose flavor and crispness if levels of humidity in storage fall too low. On the other hand, squash, pumpkin or onions decay extensively if levels of humidity are greater than 85 to 90 per cent."

Maintaining temperature at four to five degrees C and humidity between 70 and 85 per cent is a good compromise for the home gardener. Cool temperatures slow down the ripening process, inhibit sprouting and prevent storage decay from developing. Vegetables that require moist conditions do not dessicate rapidly in storage facilities with moderate levels of humidity. Produce requiring drier conditions will not decay extensively either. Most vegetables can be stored successfully for months at a time in storage facilities with these conditions provided that levels of temperature and humidity are steadily maintained. Significant fluctuations in levels of temperature and humidity will, however, significantly reduce shelf life and product quality.

"Achieving levels of humidity as high as 70 to 85 per cent in storage is a common problem for the home gardener," says Holley. "Vegetables, with the exception of potatoes, can be stored in perforated plastic bags to maintain their crispness. The floor of a storage can be sprinkled with a hose periodically, or a humidifier can be installed to increase levels of humidity."

Carrots, onions, parsnip, potatoes and turnips are almost invariably stored in commercial facilities with plenty of fans and air exchange ducts. Ventilation removes carbon dioxide, heat and odours from stored produce. Good ventilation helps to prevent unpleasant flavors from developing. Potatoes in particular consume a lot of oxygen over the storage season. They develop a distinct bluish tinge to their flesh if oxygen levels fall too low. Consequently, it is necessary to be sure that stale air inside of a home storage room is routinely exchanged with fresh air from outside.

Contact: *Jim Holley*
(403) 362-1336

Shelley Barkley
(403) 362-1305

Agri-News Briefs

CDCN helps food bank

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North (CDCN) donated 839 kilograms of food to the Edmonton Gleaners Association: Edmonton's Food Bank. A wide variety of crops are grown at CDCN to test their hardiness and yield potential. The information gathered from the CDCN test plots assists farmers and farm managers choose varieties that grow well in Alberta's climate. Being able to donate the harvest of these crops to the Edmonton Gleaners Association is an added bonus that CDCN is very proud of. The Edmonton Food Bank distributes food to over 125 agencies, churches and food depots, provides coordination and links to other food programs and distributes food hampers directly to people in need. Approximately 16,000 people use the services of the Edmonton Food Bank each month.

Grazing conference

Grassland Farming for the 21st Century is the theme of the 4th Western Canadian Grazing Conference being held on December 6 to 8, 2000 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer. The two-day conference sponsored by Alberta Forage Council, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, is designed for producers who want to improve their pasture production knowledge and techniques. Conference speakers include experienced grass farmers, researchers and forage specialists from the western Canada and the U.S. Conference registration fees are $165 per person; students $110; banquet only $25. All meals are included in the registration price. For further information contact Richard DeBruijn, Alberta Forage Council, at (403) 782-0772. Information about trade show booths ($350 for a 10' x 10' booth) is available by contacting Arvid Aasen at (403) 782-8027.

Grass production on prairie pastures

To provide timely information of the impacts of climatic variability on water supply and agriculture on the Prairies, the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) has launched a website specifically dealing with this subject. The site can be visited at <**http://www.agr.ca/pfra/drought.htm**>. The site, as well as providing current information, is designed to promote ideas and activities for groups/individuals to reduce drought vulnerability. The impact of climatic variability on the environment is of great importance to the agricultural sector on the Canadian prairies. Monitoring the impacts on water supplies, soil degradation and agricultural production is essential to the preparedness of the region in dealing with possible drought conditions. The website's pages and maps provide an overview on the risk of drought in Western Canada. Comments and suggestions on how the site could be improved are welcomed and appreciated. A color coded map of grass production on pastures of the prairie provinces is available for viewing at <**http://www.agr.ca/pfra/pasturec.htm**>. For more information, contact, E. G. (Ted) O'Brien at (306) 780-6000, fax (306) 780-8229.

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Agri-News

October 9, 2000

Farm vehicles on Alberta highways

Farm safety is always a key issue, but never more so when agricultural activity is concentrated, as it is during the harvest season.

"Farm vehicles are slow moving vehicles," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, head of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm safety program, Edmonton. "It behoves all Albertans to be a little more diligent at this time and to remember that farm equipment is being moved, especially in rural areas and on secondary hi-ways. A little patience can make a great difference in the safety of all vehicles on our roads."

Alberta Infrastructure's driver safety and research section have released the 1999 Alberta Collisions Statistics. The collisions involving farm vehicles include:

- the number of collisions involving farm equipment has remained relatively constant over the past 12 years, with a high of 96 in 1996 and a low of 59 in 1999
- the months of increased farming activity (May to October) saw the largest percentage of collisions (66.9%). Specifically, September and October experienced the highest number of collisions involving farm equipment (14.7% and 11.9%, respectively)
- Wednesday (15.9%) and Friday (15.7%) experienced more collisions than other days of the week
- the afternoon hours of 3:00 p.m. to 6:59 p.m. saw the largest percentage of collisions (33.2% of total)
- rural roads (34.4%) and primary highways (25.6%) were the scene of the majority of the collisions involving farm equipment
- the majority of the collisions involved at least one other vehicle in collision with the farm equipment (86.7%)
- the number of farm equipment operators involved in collisions were fairly evenly distributed across all ages between 15 and 59

"When it comes to safety, there is never a good reason to compromise," adds Kyeremanteng. "Haste doesn't pay. Many of the collisions reported in the last 12 years may have been avoided had all road users observed the rules of the road."

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This is Agriculture and Food Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- the action of the farm equipment operator was a factor in a large percentage of the collisions. Approximately half of the operators were recorded as making some improper action. The most frequently recorded were left turns across path (8.8%) and improper turn (5.7%)
- the most commonly recorded actions of operators of the other vehicle involved in collisions were improper passing (14.6%) and following too closely (8.2%)

"Whatever the season, safety needs to be an integral part of agriculture," says Kyeremanteng. "The farm safety campaign theme says it all – ***A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow***."

Contact: *Solomon Kyeremanteng*
(780) 427-4227

Farm Safety day-timers for grade five students

Farm safety message from grandparents are going out to rural school children.

"The prototype for a farm safety day timer aimed at grade five school children is being released for a trial run at several rural schools this January," says Marcia Hewitt-Fisher, program development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "The day timers, the first in a series of farm safety workbooks for children, contains farm safety letters and information from grandparents on the farm. The grandparents' contributions were in answer to a call for help from Alberta Agriculture's Farm Safety Branch. They clearly express that they are concerned about the safety of their own grandchildren and children across Alberta who live on or visit the farm."

For the last several months, Alberta Agriculture staff have been compiling the numerous responses to an invitation sent out to *Grandparents on the Farm*. Eric Jones from the Farm Safety Branch of Alberta Agriculture explains, "We knew there was a vast pool of talent and knowledge out there that wasn't being tapped into. We thought we would try to access that information through an invitation to grandparents to contribute farm safety stories, drawings, songs, ... anything that would relay their farm safety knowledge to school aged children."

Grandparents across Alberta responded with letters, poems and drawings of important farm safety messages for their grandchildren. There was even a farm safety song recorded on cassette and sent in to Alberta Agriculture.

"They were very creative and put a lot of effort into their submissions," adds Jones. "The submissions will be used in the day-timer which will provide grade five students with a weekly calendar for keeping track of homework and important dates, and at the same time deliver farm safety messages in a way that they can relate to."

The project to invite grandparents to participate was sponsored by Cargill AgHorizons and East Central Health along with Alberta Agriculture.

For more information, call Jones with Alberta Agriculture's farm safety program, (780) 427-4231.

Contact: *Eric Jones* *(780) 427-4231*
Marcia Hewitt-Fisher *(780) 427-3315*

New CWB feed barley contract program

On August 31, 2000, the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) announced a feed barley pilot program designed to speed up farmers' cash flow and help the CWB take advantage of marketing opportunities early in the crop year.

"This program, the Guaranteed Delivery Contract, gives feed barley producers the opportunity of delivering their feed barley before December 31," says Neil Blue, market specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Vermilion.

Farmers who entered this contract have the option to choose an early payment option that pays them 90 per cent of the Pool Return Outlook, less the usual deductions and an early payment discount, currently $2.50 per tonne, shortly after delivery. The farmer also remains in the pool account and is eligible for further payments.

"The advantage of this program is in receiving more of the barley value up front," adds Blue. "Alternatively, a farmer may take the initial price less usual deductions and receive any additional payments as in the regular program. The advantage in this case is just the guarantee of moving the feed barley earlier than through the regular CWB contract call process."

Based on the August Pool Return Outlook for No 1 CW Barley ($115 - $145) and Vermilion area elevator delivery deductions, the economics of this program look something like this:

Payment Method	**Early Payment $/tonne**	**Regular Payment $/tonne**
Initial payment	$95	$95
Less deductions	($45)	($45)
Payment #1 at delivery	$50	$50
Early payment value (90% of $130 mid-PRO)	$117	
Less initial payment	($95)	
Less early pay discount (current)	($2.50)	
CWB payment #2	$19.50	
Total Early Payment	**$69.50**	**$50**
Estimated add'l payments	$13	$35
Estimated Total Return	$82.50	$85

"My calculations indicate that the early payment option will return about $.05 per bushel less than the regular CWB delivery option, but the advantage of getting money sooner may outweigh the slightly lower price," says Blue. "For producers who have signed up for the program this year, especially producers who have light test weight feed barley that will be discounted if sold into the non-Board feed market, the program is worth a try."

For more information on the Guaranteed Delivery Contract, contact the CWB toll free at 1-800-275-4292. Information is also available at country elevators and through the internet at the CWB website <**www.cwb.ca**>.

Contact: Neil Blue
(780) 853-8101

Alberta NAWMP progress report released

The 1999/2000 Alberta North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Annual Progress Review and the second edition of the ***Biodiversity Makes it Work*** newsletter were released in September.

"The progress review, ***Working Toward the Vision*** provides information on all aspects of NAWMP in Alberta and the Peace Parklands in B.C.," says Brett Calverley, Alberta NAWMP coordinator, Edmonton. "1999/2000 marks the 14th year of implementation for the program in Alberta and we are very encouraged with the progress that has been made toward Alberta waterfowl habitat goals."

NAWMP reflects an agreement among Canada, the United States and Mexico to conserve habitats important to waterfowl on a continental scale. Part of the program's success is its commitment toward strengthening the biological foundation, landscape conservation and broadening the scope of partnerships.

"It all comes down to integrated planning and understanding the opportunities for waterfowl and wildlife species to co-exist within the agricultural landscapes of Alberta," says John Hermans, head of the Conservation and Development Branch, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and member of the Alberta NAWMP Board of Directors. "NAWMP has always reached out to other sectors and communities to partner with them to ensure the sustainability of these landscapes."

Funding contributions to NAWMP in Alberta for 1999/2000 totalled more than $18 million. Expenditures were $16.3 million, with more than 45,400 hectares secured during the fiscal year making nearly 785,000 hectares of wetlands and uplands secured to date.

NAWMP activities within Alberta are undertaken in three identified regions which have unique ecological characteristics. These regions are called biomes and are further identified as the Peace Parkland, Aspen Parkland and Prairie Biomes. A fourth biome, the Boreal Forest biome has been identified as a key region for waterfowl but, has not been included in the NAWMP.

Over 1000 individual NAWMP projects have been completed and hundreds more are currently being worked on or are in the planning stage.

For more information about NAWMP or to receive a copy of ***Working Toward the Vision***, contact Calverley at Ducks Unlimited Canada, 200, 10720 - 178 Street, Edmonton, AB T5S 1J3, or phone (780) 489-2002.

Contact: Brett Calverley John Hermans
(780) 489-2002 (780) 427-3908

New general manager named for Agriculture Marketing Council

Christine Anderson, is the new general manager of the Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council, (AAPMC). "She has a very clear vision of helping Council partners meet the challenges of achieving a world class agriculture and food industry," says Brian Rhiness, Assistant Deputy Minister of Industry Development, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton.

Anderson, was the acting general manager of AAPMC for the past 10 months. Prior to this she was manager of projects and policy for the Council for two years and first joined Alberta Agriculture as a trade policy analyst in 1995. She is a graduate of the University of Alberta where she received her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees.

AAPMC is responsible for administering the legislation to enable 16 commodity organizations in Alberta such as the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission and the Alberta Cattle Commission to assist industry in its efforts to grow and develop.

"Over the past few years, Ms. Anderson's dedication, energy and enthusiasm in working with these commissions, boards and producer groups has been very commendable," adds Ty Lund, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

Cont'd on page 4

"I am very pleased to have the opportunity to continue working with both Council and the industry given the increasingly complex issues facing the agriculture sector," says Anderson. "The Marketing Council has a positive role to play in assisting organizations build a strong agriculture and food sector."

Part of the Marketing Council's mandate includes providing opportunities for education and leadership development training and providing support for newly formed commodity boards and commissions to help the industry capitalize on domestic and export market opportunities.

The Agriculture Products Marketing Council reports to Alberta's Agriculture Minister. Other organizations the Council works with include: Alberta Barley Commission; Alberta Canola Producers Commission; Alberta Chicken Producers; Alberta Egg Producers; Alberta Hatching Egg Producers; Alberta Pork Producers Development Corporation; Potato Growers of Alberta; Alberta Sheep and Wool Commission; Alberta Soft Wheat Producers Commission; Alberta Sugar Beet Growers; Alberta Turkey Producers; Alberta Vegetable Producers; Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission and the Alberta Bison Commission.

Contact:	*Christine Anderson* *(780) 427-2164*	*Brian Rhiness* *(780) 427-2442*

Common goals for healthy landscapes

Riparian areas are the zones of water-loving vegetation along the edges of streams, rivers and lakes. Healthy riparian areas provide flood protection, vital habitat for fish and wildlife, and shelter and forage for livestock. They also filter out some contaminants from runoff for better water quality, maintain the stream's bed and banks, stabilize stream flows and recharge groundwater.

"One of the tools used in the program's process of helping local groups reach their goals for a healthy landscape is riparian health assessments. These assessments build a common language between cattle producers and land managers," says Greg Hale, provincial coordinator for the Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Program, better known as *Cows and Fish*. "The assessment provides a common set of consistent criteria or questions. This leads to a common understanding of the riparian area as the producer and our field staff go through the assessment. Once we have this common understanding, the producer can work towards solutions, if any are required."

The program goal of *Cows and Fish* is to foster a better understanding of how improvements in grazing management on riparian areas can enhance landscape health and productivity, for the benefit of ranchers and others who use and value riparian areas.

"*Cows and Fish* uses a voluntary, community- and producer-driven process," adds Hale. "The local group determines what the land use issues are in their watershed and how to address them. And they capture dollars and cost-share the actions."

A group interested in riparian management invites *Cows and Fish* to meet with them and together they work through a process that includes team building, awareness, tool building, community-based action and riparian health assessment. *Cows and Fish* has created various tools for its process, including its new riparian health assessment guide, that was completed this fall.

"*Cows and Fish* has grown rapidly since it began in 1992 in southwestern Alberta," says Hale. "Today we speak to about 6000 people per year on awareness. By raising awareness across Alberta, we've also generated a demand for more information."

Through strong support from AESA and the Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC), *Cows and Fish* is now able to hire a coordinator for central and northern Alberta to better meet this demand.

The program brings together many partners. Hale explains, "ACC and Trout Unlimited Canada are the lead partners, and then there's also Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Alberta Environment, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA). Probably our most important partners are the ranchers, their communities and agricultural service boards that work with us on a local and regional basis.

"*Cows and Fish* is also working with various agencies to address other water quality and quantity issues. For members, restoring riparian areas is an essential part of maintaining a healthy landscape. Healthy landscapes translate into healthy communities."

For more information, call Hale at (403) 381-5377, Barry Adams, range management specialist with Alberta Agriculture in Lethbridge, (403) 382-4299 or visit the new *Cows and Fish* website at <**http://www.cowsandfish.org**>.

Contact:	*Greg Hale* *(403) 381-5377*	*Barry Adams* *(403) 382-4299*

Agri-News Briefs

Stacking up so far in 2000

Alberta exports of primary and processed agricultural and food products rebounded in the first half of 2000 following two years of decline. On a year-to-date basis, the value of exports at $2.6 billion rose 25 per cent over the same period in 1999. Some of the January to June 2000 highlights are:

- with some exceptions, the growth in most of Alberta agri-food exports resulted from both higher prices and larger quantities
- the value of wheat exports jumped almost 90 per cent to $585 million and quantity more than doubled, reaching 3.0 million tonnes
- Iran was the number one buyer of Alberta wheat
- barley shipments rose over 80 per cent in both value and quantity
- shipments of live hogs rose 22 per cent in value owing to better prices, however, quantity was down 14 per cent
- exports of canola rose by 14 per cent in quantity but declined 10 per cent in value as a result of depressed prices
- exports of live cattle advanced 10 per cent in value to $252 million and two per cent in volume to 201,470 head
- beef exports, at $669 million, continued to grow, rising 19 per cent over 1999
- exports of processed potatoes, mainly french fries, have significantly increased, with the value reaching $85 million, up 442 per cent from $16 million reported in the first half of 1999
- the top five agri-food products exported so far in 2000 are beef and veal; wheat; live cattle; canola seed; and, processed potatoes. Exports of these five agri-food categories in the first half of 2000 totalled $1.7 billion
- the top five markets for Alberta agri-food exports are United States; Japan; Iran; Mexico; and, the People's Republic of China. Exports to these five countries in the first half of 2000 totalled $2.0 billion
- for the second consecutive year, January to June exports of value added products were higher than exports of primary commodities (animals and crops)

For further information on Alberta's agri-food exports, contact Barb Pekalski, trade statistician with statistics and data development, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton, (780) 427-5386, or e-mail <**barb.pekalski@agric.gov.ab.ca**>.

Biodiversity makes it work

The second issue of ***Biodiversity Makes It Work***, a newsletter of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), describing the broad wildlife benefits of the NAWMP in Alberta is now available. Some of the featured articles include information on ducks; Alberta's amphibians; nesting cover; burrowing owls; and, biological indicators of wetland health. The newsletter is published by the Alberta NAWMP partners Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Environment, Environment Canada and Ducks Unlimited Canada. Copies are available by contacting DU Canada at 200, 10720 - 178 Street, Edmonton, AB T5S 1J3. For more information on NAWMP Alberta, visit the NAWMP website at <**www.ducks.ca/nawmp**>.

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Agri-News

October 16, 2000

Major farm income support package

A new provincial agricultural assistance package will provide an additional $233 million in emergency support to Alberta's farmers and ranchers this fall.

"Farmers are being hit by continued income problems and the Alberta government is not prepared to let them slip through the cracks," says Ty Lund, Minister, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "These initiatives, announced on October 6, 2000, will provide immediate cash-flow assistance to Alberta farmers and ranchers."

The initiative package is in response to another difficult year of extreme weather, continuous low commodity prices, growing input costs and the federal government's refusal to provide equitable assistance as in other prairie provinces.

"I toured the province this summer and fall and saw first hand the devastation facing the agricultural community," says Lund. "More than 20 million acres were affected by drought while other areas have faced untimely rain and cutworm infestation. Frost and a cool growing season have also reduced yields and crop quality."

The immediate support package will have the following components:

- an Alberta Farm Income Assistance Program (FIAP) supplement payment of $6.00 per acre for all cultivated acres. This is in addition to the $4.29 paid in March 2000
- a new pasture component to FIAP will pay $3.00 per acre on native pasture
- beekeepers will be eligible for a payment under FIAP of $3.00 per registered colony in 2000
- a disaster loan program – the Alberta Farm Income Disaster Loan – will provide low interest loans with payment deferral to eligible farming operations
- advanced payments of up to 50 percent of estimated eligible payments under the Farm Income Disaster Program (FIDP) for the 2000 crop year

"It is frustrating that the federal government has not responded adequately to our request for our share of the same assistance offered in this spring in Saskatchewan and Manitoba," adds Lund. "We have asked the federal government to treat Alberta's producers equitably; to provide $103 million to put us at par with the program provided in those provinces. We have also asked for a refund of the $77 million in crop reinsurance money that belongs to Alberta's farmers, but so far, we have not had a satisfactory response."

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Lund assures that the province will continue its efforts to work with the federal government to reach an agreement on the funding.

Applicants under the FIAP program from March 2000 will automatically receive the additional $6 per acre payment within the next six weeks. More information about the program is available at Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices, Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) offices, on the internet at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca**> and by calling 310-4455 (toll-free). Applications forms for the components are available on the internet and will be available at Alberta Agriculture and AFSC offices after October 15, 2000.

Details of the Program

Farm Income Assistance Program (FIAP) Supplement Payment

The FIAP program of March 14, 2000 provided $130 million to Alberta farmers, representing the 40 per cent provincial share of the federal – provincial special funding program as offered in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. At the time, the Alberta government promised that any money received from the federal government would flow through to farmers. Work to reach an agreement on the federal funding issue continues, but since farmers are faced with an immediate cash flow problem, the provincial government chose to assist producers immediately.

- supplement payment of $6 per 1999 cultivated acre as applied for under FIAP
- cheques will be automatically sent to all FIAP applicants on confirmed acres already paid the $4.29 per acre
- late applicants under FIAP will automatically qualify for the supplement payment
- supplement payment deadline for producers who did not apply under FIAP is January 15, 2001
- estimated cost for supplement program – $180 million. The federal government will be asked to reimburse the Alberta government for this amount

Farm Income Assistance Program (FIAP) Pasture Component

The combination of drought in 27 municipalities, excessive moisture in central Alberta, cutworm damage in the Peace Region and rising input costs has resulted in low pasture and forage yields, poor quality hay and tight margins for many producers. In addition, the suspension of the pasture insurance program for 2000 left many producers without protection against poor pasture production.

- payment of $3 per acre on native hay and pasture land in 2000 to a maximum of $100,000 per individual or $500,000 per corporation
- eligible producers can claim allotments through grazing associations, cooperatives, etc., based on conversion to acres as determined by the local association
- tame hay/pasture that was not eligible under FIAP will qualify (i.e. tame hay/pasture under grazing lease arrangements and the Permanent Cover Program)
- acres paid under FIAP or a 2000 disaster recovery program will not be eligible for this payment
- beekeepers who are registered under the Alberta Bee Act will be eligible to receive a payment of $3 per registered colony in operation in 2000 to a maximum of $100,000 per individual or $500,000 per corporation, etc.
- FIAP applications are available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development district offices and on the Internet at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca**> or by calling, toll free, 310-4455
- application deadline is January 15, 2001
- available only to Alberta resident/tax payers who are active farmers (landlords not eligible)
- estimated cost – $51 million

Alberta Farm Income Disaster Program – Advanced payment

The Farm Income Disaster Program (FIDP) provides income support to actively farming producers when, for reasons beyond their control, there is an extreme reduction in farm income. Farmers may apply for payment when their claim year program margin (farm revenue minus eligible farm expenses) drop below 70 per cent of historical average. The historical margin is calculated using the best three out of the past five years.

In previous years, farmers had to file an income tax return prior to applying under FIDP. To assist farmers with cash flow problems in the event of a severe income drop caused by adverse weather, drastic price declines and other causes, for the year 2000, farmers will be able to apply for an advanced payment of up to 50 per cent of the projected payment, prior to filing a tax return. In October 1999, significant changes were made to FIDP that will helps with income shortfalls.

- to be eligible, farmers must have completed at least six months of production in the claim year
- crop producers can only apply after harvest
- a short-form application has been developed to speed up processing for the advance payments
- historical information for the previous five years must be provided
- applications are available at all Agriculture Financial Services Corporation offices or by calling 1-800-851-5070 (toll-free)

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- producers must complete a detailed program application following the end of their tax year and the filing of their tax return for the respective year.

FIDP is projected to pay out as much as $136 million to cover Year 2000 income losses. There is no extra cost associated with the advance payment provision beyond some minor additional administration costs. For more information, please contact AFSC at 1-800-851-5070.

Alberta Farm Income Disaster Loan (AFIDL)

This loan program is designed to help address cash flow problems this fall due to income shortfalls and reduced farm margins related to low yields and higher input costs. It is consistent with disaster assistance loan programs offered in previous years.

- borrowing maximum – $100,000 per individual or $300,000 per corporation, partnership, etc. with three or more individuals
- 12 year term with the option to defer interest and principal payments for two years
- seven per cent interest rate for one year production/income loss in excess of 30 per cent
- five per cent interest rate for production/income loss in excess of 30 per cent in two of the last three years
- financial need must be demonstrated
- application deadline – June 30, 2001
- applications are available at all Agriculture Financial Services Corporation offices or by calling (780) 679-1349 (toll-free by first dialing 310-0000)
- estimated cost – $2 million in 2000/2001, $4 million in total to 2005

For more information, please contact AFSC at (780) 679-1349 (toll-free by first dialing 310-0000)

Contact:	*Michael Lohner*	*Ken Moholitny*
	(780) 427-2137	*(780) 427-3078*

Government numbers are toll-free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000, first

2000 Hall of Fame

Three extraordinary men were inducted into Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Hall of Fame on October 6, 2000. For their distinguished service to agriculture, Calvin Ausenhus of Didsbury, Jim Graham of Rainier, and Dr John Toogood of Edmonton, were posthumously honoured at the Hall of Fame awards ceremony at the Mayfield Inn in Edmonton.

"This year's inductees are wonderful examples of what strong leadership, innovation, tenacity and passion for one's livelihood can accomplish," says Ty Lund, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "They deserve our respect and admiration for what they have done to further the health and vitality of the province's agriculture industry."

The Hall of Fame Selection Committee chooses Hall of Fame inductees based on strong personal qualities as well as their significant contributions to agriculture and rural life in Alberta. The Government of Alberta is proud to salute this year's inductees and their families for their outstanding achievements.

Calvin Wayne Ausenhus

Almost 25 years ago, a new vision for farming began to grow near the small Alberta town of Didsbury. Frustrated with a lack of grain marketing options, Calvin Ausenhus and a group of neighbors began loading rail cars themselves. It was the start of a revolution and Ausenhus led the charge to a more open grain handling and marketing system for western farmers. In 1979, Ausenhus co-founded Chinook Grain. It pioneered producer grain car loading and on-farm grain pickup. By giving farmers direct access to feedlots and rail cars, off-board grain prices took off. To combat the negative effects the Canola Cash Call Market had on shipping options, Chinook Grain let farmers book dealer cars at reduced rates. Ausenhus co-founded four producer organizations, including the Western Barley Growers Association, and advised several more. He showed farmers how to reduce their price risk by using the futures and commodities markets. He advocated for changes in Alberta's Futures Exchange, better Alberta representation on the Winnipeg Commodity Association and the establishment of the Ag. Options Market in western Canada. Ausenhus was also the first member of the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Board of Governors not from Manitoba. He helped develop the Alberta Barley Contract (later called the Western Barley Contract), which today is recognized as the world standard.

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James Harold Graham

Several years of hail damage back in the 50s persuaded Jim Graham to switch from grain to cattle production. It was a pivotal decision for both Graham and Alberta's burgeoning beef industry. The experience he gained as a producer and feeder combined with passion and political know-how helped make Canada a world-wide leader and model for excellence in cattle production. Graham became chair of the Alberta Cattle Commission and the Beef Export Federation, as well as President of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. He is well-remembered for his 1986 stand against importing heavily subsidized European beef. When asked how much of the beef Canada would accept, he responded with, "Not one damn pound!" His decision saved the Canadian industry an estimated $500 million over 10 years. By leading the industry out of the National Tripartite Stabilization Program two years ahead of schedule and supporting NAFTA, he set a strong example at GATT talks. Under his direction, the Canada Beef Export Federation evolved and expanded into Mexico and the Pacific Rim. Despite opposition from other member countries, Graham invited Mexico to join the Five Nations Beef Conference. While devoting 200 days a year to promoting the cattle industry, Graham also oversaw a successful business, South Slope Feeders Ltd.

Dr. John Alfred Toogood

John Toogood never forgot the *Dirty '30s* when he watched his father's farm soil blow into the ditches like snow. He combined his love of the land with a passion for teaching and became one of the most prominent and influential soil scientists in all of North America.

Toogood spent 30 years at the University of Alberta soil sciences department working tirelessly to improve agricultural production through research into soil testing and fertility, erosion control, production systems and agrometeorology. His water erosion research was the first of its kind in Alberta and several of his extension bulletins and booklets were landmark publications. The simplified textural triangle, proposed by Toogood in 1958 and widely adopted across Canada, is now gaining international use. Due to his foresight, the Breton Soil Fertility Plots, a critical tool used to gauge long term agricultural practices on land, were saved from abandonment and further developed. Toogood's practical and down-to-earth manner made him a popular teacher and speaker for farmers and fertilizer dealers, as well as industry representatives, policy-makers, media and scientists from around the world. His contributions were recognized with five professional honours and were an invaluable resource to the Alberta Institute of Agrologists, as well as countless other professional and community organizations.

More information about Alberta Agriculture's Hall of Fame Awards and past inductees can be found on Alberta Agriculture's website at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/hall_of_fame**>.

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Feedlot operators beefing-up farm safety!

The Alberta beef industry continues to grow in size and specialization, from the days of the first pioneers that herded cattle into Alberta in the late 1800's. Alberta has nearly 60 per cent of Canada's beef production with 1.9 million breeding beef cows and heifers. The province's four thousand feedlots feed 2.4 million head of cattle each year and make the province the fifth largest cattle feeding area in North America.

"This success does not come without its downside," says Alan Perry, agriculture marketing representative with Workers' Compensation Board, Alberta. "The increase in the worldwide demand for food has lead to an increase in the number of workers employed on Alberta feedlots and the risk of a farm accident occurring. There has been 100 agriculture related fatalities in the last five years in Alberta. These figures are approximately double the number of fatalities in the manufacturing and processing industry within the same time frame. Agriculture is considered a high risk industry."

As feedlots tend to be one of the larger employers within the Agriculture industry, many feedlot owners are now taking a serious look at implementing safety and disability programs, to minimize and reduce the impact of workplace accidents.

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"Feedlot safety begins with a decision – the decision to make the safety of employees, family, contractors and visitors a top priority on the farm operation," says Perry. "That decision was formalized by the owners of Highland Feeders and Cattleland Feedyards, when they signed the first-ever agreements for Agricultural Safety and Health Policies with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development on February 26, 2000 at the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Convention 2000."

"This all began about two years ago, when both Highland and Cattleland contacted the department looking for training on first aid," says Eric Jones, senior farm safety specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton. "As a result of that first contact, we realized that the industry would greatly benefit from a safety and health program, specifically designed with the unique needs of the feedlot in mind. The commitment to developing this model, taken by Highland and Cattleland, has really demonstrated pro-active leadership in a non-regulated industry."

"The development of this program with Alberta Agriculture was the next step, in what has always been a priority for us," explains Page Stuart, Research Director, Highland Feeders LTD. "Employees are important to us and we believe they are our greatest asset– they are Highland. The level of knowledge and skill, combined with the breadth and depth of expertise that we require from our employees, is unusual in most industries but common in the agriculture industry. We want to attract and retain these highly skilled people, and provide them with a workplace environment that's safe and healthy to work in. The training that we have undertaken ensures that our employees are confident that they are prepared to deal with workplace accidents, should they occur, and have a sense of comfort knowing that all their co-workers are fully trained in first aid."

Highland has realized that the future of the beef industry lies in adding value to the end product. One of the ways to do that is to add value to the environment that the beef is produced in. The development of the feedlot safety and health program helps to facilitate this.

"We have 35 staff and we wanted a better level of preparedness," says Norm Kuntz of Cattleland. "For the most part it was for health related reasons, knowing what to do in an emergency. Setting up a safety and health program has allowed us to identify potential problems, and has included training on first aid, fire safety, confined spaces, and materials handling. The rapid growth of our feedlot brought us to a point, as with any developing business, where the human resources considerations had to keep evolving at the same time. The feedlot industry tends to have less rules and prefers to be self-regulated rather than have regulations imposed upon them. Therefore, we felt that this initiative had to be industry driven and derived. For us, it just seemed like a natural progression for our evolving business."

Today's feedlots are striving to produce what the customer demands – a premium quality safe product. Feedlots are concerned with not only producing the best beef, but in having the best employees looking after this product. This year in Alberta, 45 feedlot employees are enrolled in the Green Certificate training program.

"The Green Certificate program fully trains the employees in all aspects of feedlot production, including safety," says Walter Scott, regional farm training specialist with Alberta Agriculture "The safety component is built into the certificate and is tested as part of the program. In addition, every employee enrolled in the program is automatically covered by the Workers' Compensation Board, and they are entitled to full compensation, medical and rehabilitation benefits, should they become injured while working on obtaining their Green Certificate. This certificate is fully funded through Alberta Agriculture and includes the cost of the WCB coverage, the only cost to the employer/trainer and employee is the time and effort needed to learn."

"We are proud to be involved in this exciting new development for the feedlot industry," says Perry. "WCB-Alberta has partnered with Alberta Agriculture and Alberta Human Resources and Employment to continue developing the model for the feedlot industry. Our goal is to have a Safety and Health program certified as the industry standard for feedlots, that has been self-developed by the feedlots. This has never been done before, and we feel that this compliments our vision: ***Albertans working – a safe, healthy and strong Alberta***.

"Getting involved with this program allows us to get more information about the WCB benefits across to the agriculture industry. Many feedlot operators, farmers and ranchers simply aren't aware that they can get coverage for their agriculture business through the WCB. WCB-Alberta is taking a proactive role in promoting farm safety through involvement in projects such as this, and through innovative premium discount programs. WCB-Alberta coverage provides farm businesses with liability protection for work-related accidents. It also provides wage replacement and a comprehensive benefits package which covers medical and rehabilitation costs for individuals injured on the job. Protection is available for both farm operators and their workers as well as farm operators without workers and directors of farm corporations."

The development and adoption of the feedlot Safety and Health Program, can only help to reduce the occurrence of injury and fatalities within the agriculture industry. Alberta Agriculture will be working to adapt this model for other areas within the agriculture industry, as they believe that even one farm accident is still one too many. Farm safety must be a priority with employers and their workers.

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Safety is a well-defined management function and has it's own business rewards. Safety is a bottom-line issue that can prevent a lot of unnecessary suffering, downtime and lost revenue. The bottom line is: poor safety is bad business for owners, operators, employees and society!

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Farm safety a priority

The Raymond and District Futures Society, that manages the North American Farm and Environmental Safety Centre installed a new executive at their annual meeting. Ralph Heninger replaces Willard Paxman as chairman.

"We were saddened by the passing of Willard Paxman, last summer. He had been a mainstay in the running of the Safety Centre," says Bronwyn Freeze, Raymond and District Futures Society program coordinator. "As chairman, he accomplished much and also contributed countless hours to the cause of farm safety. He will be greatly missed by the community of Raymond as a whole, but especially by the board of the Safety Centre. Gordon George will join with returning vice-chairman Ruth Nalder as a vice-chairman, and Cindy Fyfe continues as treasurer."

The North American Farm and Environmental Safety Centre completed an interesting and diverse year. The *Safety Smarts* program was expanded, the *Protect Your Health, Wear the Gear* program was continued, a new web site was developed and a new initiative *The Rural Hazard Management Program* is being developed.

"The purpose of the *Safety Smarts Program* is to help children become aware of the dangers on farms, to show them how they can avoid accidents and how to be safety conscious," adds Freeze. "Four school divisions were targeted: Horizon, Livingstone Range, Palliser and Westwinds. Presentations were made in 31 schools and 20 Colony schools, reaching a total of 4715 students, an increase of over 1200 students from the previous year."

The *Protect Your Health, Wear the Gear* project promotes awareness of the significant occupational health risks in the rural population, especially sound induced hearing loss and respiratory disease. Because agriculture is primarily a non-regulated industry, focus is on awareness of the problems and information to promote the use of protective clothing and equipment.

"A health screening component was added to the project to provide baseline data and foster personal incentive for using protective equipment to prevent health deterioration," says Freeze. "A free draw for safety equipment included awareness-testing questions on the use of protective equipment."

The program was first implemented in 1999 and 2000 is the second year of operation. The project is funded by Farm Credit Corporation and the Lethbridge Foundation. The program was presented at Ag Expo in Lethbridge and the Alberta Pork Congress in Red Deer where health screening tests were given to over 300 area farmers and ranchers. A number of static displays, that did not include testing, were featured throughout the province.

"The centre hired a student this summer with the specific responsibility of drafting and designing a Centre website," says Freeze. "Much research and work went into completing the project and we are now making arrangements for the hosting of the site on the internet. One exciting aspect of the site, is that there are several links to information specific to certain hazards and safety issues featured through the resources page. If someone wants to know something about tractor rollovers, they can click on that line in the resources section, and be linked to a page specific to tractor rollovers. This is a great breakthrough in internet surfing for farm safety."

"It is encouraging to see more people involved in promoting awareness of farm safety," says Solomon Kyeremanteng, head of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's farm safety program, Edmonton. "Whatever the season, whatever the activity, safety needs to be an integral part of agriculture. The farm safety campaign theme says it all – ***A Safe Farm is a Great Place to Grow***."

The North American Farm and Environmental Safety Centre is moving forward with it's programs for the coming year. If anyone has questions or is wanting to become involved in the Centre's programs, please contact the centre at (403) 752-4585.

Contact: *Bronwyn Freeze* *(403) 752-4585*
Solomon Kyeremanteng *(780) 427-4227*

Finding water quality solutions

The Oldman River and its tributaries wind through a landscape busy with activity – cities and towns, crop land, livestock operations, irrigated land, oil and gas sites, other industries, and natural areas. Whatever happens on the land can affect water quality, and in the Oldman River Basin, there's a lot happening.

The combination of the basin's intensive land use and its limited supply of water makes it the perfect place to develop effective ways to protect water quality. And that's how the Oldman River Basin Water Quality Initiative was born.

Created in 1997, the initiative brings together all the stakeholders in the basin to address water quality concerns. It involves leaders from many areas, including health, agriculture, environment, municipalities, industry and education.

The initiative's five-year action plan, released in March 1998, has three major objectives:

- to measure water quality in the basin
- to implement changes to solve existing water quality problems and prevent future problems
- to have the local communities take leadership in managing water quality in the basin.

"Collecting accurate water quality data proved to be a crucial step for the initiative. Even within the first year, when people saw the data, they understood that everyone is part of the issue and everyone needs to be part of the solution," says Brent Paterson, head of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's irrigation branch, Lethbridge. "The data provide a common understanding of the situation, allowing the discussion to move from pointing fingers to seeking effective solutions."

The committee that guides the initiative's day-to-day activities is made up of a large group of stakeholder representatives who meet once or twice a year to provide overall direction for the program. Some of the major players in the implementation of the action plan are Alberta Agriculture, Chinook Health Region, Alberta Environment, the City of Lethbridge, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Four teams have been created to carry out the initiative's action plan:

- the Land Assessment Component has completed mapping the basin's land use types. This information is being used to find links between land use and water quality, and to define where water quality is vulnerable to contamination. The vulnerability maps will allow municipal planners and developers to avoid these areas when siting new developments.
- the Water Quality Monitoring Component is measuring a wide range of variables, including nitrogen, phosphorus, bacteria and about 40 pesticides, at sites along the river and its tributaries, and at wastewater treatment plants. The component has established baseline data for the river system and identified areas of concern. Continued monitoring will allow tracking of changes in water quality as practices change.
- the Best Management Practices Component is assessing the effects of various practices on water quality in priority watersheds. A number of applied research and demonstration projects have been set up with local landowners, and more are planned for this year.
- the Education and Awareness Component is providing information about water quality and the initiative. Activities to date include annual public workshops, a website, annual reports, newsletters, and brochures on how urban and rural people can protect water quality. This year, the component will change its thrust from general awareness to education for practice change.

"The increased focus on practice change is one of the keys to the initiative's long-term success," says Paterson. "Protecting water quality needs to become part of everyone's lifestyle, rather than looking to others to solve the problem. Local leadership is the other key and it is hoped that when the five years are up, the local communities will take over leadership in making change happen and protecting the resource.

"People attending the latest annual workshop showed a strong commitment to move forward. There's a positive feeling and drive to work this thing through."

For more information, contact Brent Paterson by phone (403) 381-5140 or email <**brent.paterson@gov.ab.ca**>. Additional information is also available on the initiative's website at <**http://www.cattlefeeder.ab.ca/obi/**>.

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Agri-News Briefs

Millang named Farmer of the Year

The Alberta SPCA has named Colin Millang, a second-generation hog farmer from the Camrose area as the Farmer of the Year. Each year, the Alberta SPCA looks for a full-time farmer who takes exceptional care of his or her animals. In their decision, they consider both the physical and psychological well being and care of the animals. About four years ago, Millang and his family started making changes to their intensive hog operation. Their stock now has more room to move freely throughout the barns, the windows are opened to let in natural light and fresh air, and they started providing straw bedding for the pigs in the finishing barn. The family also uses various stress-reducing handling methods when weighing and moving the pigs. The Millangs are also involved in pasture poultry, rearing poultry in portable pens that are moved regularly to fresh pasture. Congratulations to Colin Millang and his family on being named Farmer of the Year. For more information, contact Millang at (780) 672-2993.

Alberta land values

For the period of July 1, 1999 to January 1, 2000, land values in the province rose an average of 3.5 per cent. This figure is up from the 2.1 per cent increase listed in the previous six month period, as reported in Farm Credit Corporation (FCC) *Farmland Values*. Land values in southern Alberta are generally higher, with the value of irrigated land leading the way. Dry land prices remained stable to slightly higher. According to FCC, the corridor between Edmonton, Red Deer and Calgary is the most active and has generally experienced the highest percentage increases in land values. Demand for land is strong and the market active. Strong off-farm employment, good beef prices and purchasers relocating both from within Alberta and from outside of Canada are driving the demand for land. Northern Alberta, including the Peace region, is showing stable land values. *Farmland Values* reports land values in percentages because land demands significantly different prices from one region of the country to another, reporting in percentage format gives a more accurate comparison of market activity. FCC publishes Farmland Values twice yearly. For further information, contact FCC in Regina, Saskatchewan at (306) 780-3490 or visit the FCC website at <**www.fcc-sca.ca**>.

Animal welfare lecture and awards

Louis D. Hyndman Sr. is the feature speaker for the Animal Welfare Lecture and Awards being held at the Stollery Executive Development Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton, on October 23, 2000. The afternoon session, scheduled for 1:00 p.m. to 5:40 p.m., also includes presentations by George Iwama, director general, Institute for Marine Biosciences, National Research Council, Halifax, NS; Melvin Dennis Jr., professor and chairman of the department of comparative medicine, University of Washington, Seattle, WA; Ernest Olfert, director, animal resources centre, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.; and, David Morton, head of the centre for biomedical ethics, Division of Primary Care, Public and Occupational Health, University of Birmingham, UK. There is no charge for attending the forum, however, all participants must preregister by contacting, Biosciences Animal Service, CW 401 Biological Sciences Building, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2E9, e-mail <**dmckay@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca**> or phone (780) 492-5193.

Alberta Horticultural Congress

The 2000 Alberta Horticultural Congress and Prairie West Trade Show will be held in Edmonton on November 9 to 11, 2000 at the Mayfield Inn. The congress has scheduled 50 technical sessions and the trade show features 220 booths. For information on the congress and trade show, as well as information on registration, contact Shirley Alton, congress coordinator, at (780) 415-2324.

Agri-News

October 23, 2000

Funding announced to help raise agriculture and food industry profile in Alberta

Growing Alberta, a project to raise the public profile of Alberta agriculture industry – from its economic impact to its excellent record in terms of food safety – received a $2 million boost from the governments of Canada and Alberta.

The announcement was made on October 13, 2000 by Alberta Senator Daniel Hays, on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief , and Ty Lund, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. One million dollars from each level of government has been committed to the Growing Alberta initiative at the third annual Harvest Gala. The Gala is held each year in Calgary to celebrate the success of the agriculture industry.

The Growing Alberta initiative, administered by the Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta, is an awareness program designed to create a greater understanding of agricultural issues, and promote the success of the industry. The program's priority is environmental sustainability, but it also addresses issues related to food safety and quality, the links between food and wellness and the contribution of agriculture to Alberta's quality of life and economy.

"Agriculture is one of the pillars of the Alberta economy and it's extremely important to raise awareness of this fact," says Hays. "Growing Alberta has done an excellent job of communicating to the public on this and other issues ranging from environmental sustainability to food safety. This type of promotion is a priority for the Government of Canada and we are pleased to be partnering with Alberta's agricultural sector and the province to provide continuing support to the program."

"Discussions during Ag Summit 2000 highlighted the need for public awareness to profile the agriculture and food industry's commitment to responsible stewardship from gate to plate and to our economic well being," says Lund. "We have confidence the Growing Alberta program is an ideal vehicle to help make this happen. As government, we want to be a partner in helping Albertans know about where their safe, quality food comes from. That's why our funding is contingent on matching funds from the private sector."

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The $2 million in government funding will be used by Growing Alberta to help launch a new promotion and communication plan. Industry will provide an additional $1 million to the project.

"This new strategy and plan is designed to link members of the food industry to achieve new value added growth targets and to bring public awareness about Alberta products," adds Frank Fallwell, Chair of the Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta.

Federal funding for Growing Alberta comes from the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) Fund. Created in the 1995 federal budget, the CARD fund is a $60 million-a-year initiative designed to provide Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry with the necessary tools to adapt to a changing world economy. Provincial funding is from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

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*(*toll-free in Alberta by dialing 310-000)*

Recirculating aquaculture workshop in Alberta

Fish farmers from all over western Canada met at the Lethbridge Community College on July 13 to 15, 2000 to attend a workshop on recirculating aquaculture. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, along with the Canadian Aquaculture Institute and the Alberta Fish Farmers Association were the organizers for this event that attracted 125 people for the two-day workshop, including individuals from the U.S. and Kuwait.

"Aquaculture is an expensive venture," says Duncan Lloyd, head of Alberta Agriculture's aquaculture section, Lethbridge. "One of the main, on-going operational costs is water. Aquaculture recirculation systems can reduce water requirements by 95 per cent, purifying and recycling water for reuse. Recirculation systems also mean controlled environments for year-round production. These intensive systems help manage fish health and effluent concerns."

The keynote address at the National Aquaculture Recirculation Technology Workshop was Yves Bastien, commissioner for aquaculture development, Fisheries and Oceans Canada. He emphatically pointed out that recirculation technology is a means to make aquaculture more environmentally sustainable.

"There is a need for more research and development in order to improve efficacy and efficiency of recirculation technology and its broader use," says Bastien. "We need to keep in mind that this technology and expertise was developed here in Canada and will be exportable around the world as aquaculture continues to grow and expand into new areas."

It is estimated that within the next generation, aquaculture will be as much a part of the food production chain as dairy, beef and poultry production. Canadians and consumers worldwide will be purchasing aquaculture products because they are fresh, high quality and affordable. It is essential that this growing industry also demonstrates that production can be done in an efficient and sustainable manner.

"Recirculation technology has many benefits," says Lloyd. "It can increase production from a given volume of water. It allows producers to establish ventures in areas of the province where insufficient water resources could have made it impossible to consider aquaculture. But, probably the biggest benefit of recirculation technology is water conservation."

Not only does recirculation reduce the water needs of an aquaculture business, but it reduces well pumping costs and heating costs. It also significantly reduces effluent. Being able to reduce the amount of water required to produce a tonne of fish results in a reduced, but concentrated volume of wastewater. This improves the ability to remove solids reducing biological oxygen demand and producing an effluent that is, in some cases, better quality that the raw water the operation started with.

"Recirculation systems empower farmers with complete environmental control, allowing them to plan production that optimises the use of their facilities and provides for the best return on their capital investment," adds Bastien.

"Recirculation technology is water treatment technology. The fish that are reared in a recirculation system are only one of many products that can be produced within the facility. Ammonia is a primary by-product of fish farming and is a very valuable fertilizer. In it's liquid form, this fertilizer can be readily used by greenhouse and hydroponic growers producing tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce and herbs. It's also much in demand by growers of strawberries, raspberries and blueberries."

There are approximately 93 commercial fish farms in Alberta and 2,700 recreational farms that stock ponds and raise fish in the province. Alberta currently allows the rearing of six species of fish under either recreational or commercial 'A' licence: Arctic char, Brook trout, Brown trout, Rainbow trout, Tiger trout and Grass carp (triploid fish only). An additional 10 species are licenced in contained waters under a commercial 'B' licence only: Atlantic salmon, Chinook salmon, Coho salmon, Sockeye salmon/Kokanee salmon, Freshwater prawn, Goldfish, Koi, Tilapia, Bigmouth buffalo fish and American eel.

Cont'd on page 3

Alberta Agriculture has produced several factsheets on the aquaculture industry, ***Fresh Water Aquaculture Industry*** (Agdex 485/830-1) and ***Aquaculture Profit$*** (Agdex FS485/821-1) are available free of charge from Alberta Agriculture offices and from the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Further information about this industry is available on the Alberta Agriculture website at **<www.agric.gov.ab.ca>** by simply typing in ***aquaculture*** as an internal search command.

Contact: Duncan Lloyd
(403) 381-5539

2000 Alberta Hort Congress

The Alberta Horticultural Congress is an annual event that attracts people involved in the nursery, greenhouse, fruit, herb and market garden industries. The 2000 Congress is being held in Edmonton at the Mayfield Inn on November 9 to 11.

"Again this year we have an exciting panel of speakers," says Shirley Alton, congress coordinator. "Phil Reilly, from Reilly's Country Gardens in Ontario, will be bringing slides of wonderful private gardens as well as making a presentation on growing and maintaining ornamental grasses."

The agenda also includes several other speakers of interest. John Sauve, Wild Blueberry Council, who will discuss how an excellent executive director can expand markets and show the grower's group how to implement this strategy. Fred Wein, Clearview Horticultural Products, Aldergrove, B.C., will make two presentations on the growing and selling of clematis.

"The Flower and Herb Growers Society of Alberta (FHGSA) are bringing in speakers on gene banks, farm breeders, marketing herbs and value adding and organic farming," adds Alton. "Vance Corum, Ad Vance Marketing, will discuss display and advertising methods for profitability and Andre Carrier, Horticutlural Corps Advisor, Quebec, will cover greenhouse organic vegetable production and the status of the greenhouse vegetable industry."

The Congress also features sessions on research projects, handling of fruit, tourism, foliar feeding, customer service and sessions on many other topics.

The Prairie West Trade Show, run in conjunction with the Congress, has 220 booths and is available to all professional growers.

For further information, or to receive a full program and registration form, contact Alton at (780) 415-2324 or fax (780) 998-7776.

Contact: Shirley Alton
(780) 415-2324

25th Poultry workshop being held in Banff

The Poultry Service Industry Workshop (PSIW) is being held at the Banff Centre, October 25 to 27, 2000.

"The Workshop will feature about 20 seminars and sessions on topics of interest to poultry service industry," says Narine Singh, poultry specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "Each year, we ask the service industry what topics they need information on and we design the program on the basis of their feedback. The conference attracts service industry personnel from across Canada and the U.S, but primarily from the four western provinces. The organizing committee ensures that the presenters are well known experts in their respective fields and that they are effective communicators."

This year's program covers a wide range of topics, such as: *Research Update & The Big Picture*, by Dr. Frank Robinson, University of Alberta; *History of the J-Virus: What Have We Learned*, by Dr. Tom Brown, University of Georgia; *Turkey Poults: The Critical First Four Weeks*, by Dr. Helen Wojcinski, *Hybrid Turkeys; Grower Relations – Inside Out*, Dr. Larry Cole, University of Arkansas; and *Globalization: Its Blessings and Curses*, Dr. Larry Martin, George Morris Institute.

Cost of the workshop is $70 per person. For further information, contact Sandy Clarke, Alberta Agriculture, #905, O.S. Longman Building, 6909 - 116 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 4P2, or call (780) 415-6107, e-mail **<sandra.clarke@gov.ab.ca>**.

Further information is also available on the internet at **<www.poultryworkshop.com>**.

Contact: Narine Singh
(780) 415-0827

Partnership creates Alberta Elk Centre

The Alberta Elk Association, University of Alberta and Agriculture, Food and Rural Development have announced a partnership creating the Alberta Elk Centre. This new partnership brings together the three organizations to strengthen and enhance research, education and development of Alberta's growing elk industry.

The core of the centre will be a new office facility in Leduc that houses three Alberta Elk Association staff and two Alberta Agriculture specialists. Another key component of the partnership is the U of A's Ministik Research facility that currently maintains a herd of approximately 200 elk.

"One of the messages we heard during Ag Summit 2000 was that government should focus more of its resources into partnerships with industry and academic institutions," says Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Combining resources can stimulate more development than we can with each party working independently. The Alberta Elk Centre certainly responds to this message from the Ag Summit and I am pleased that we have the opportunity to work with the Alberta Elk Association and the University of Alberta."

Don Bamber, President of the Alberta Elk Association said that this new partnership represents a significant milestone for the rapidly developing elk industry. He added that the opportunities and challenges ahead for the industry will require the combination of knowledge and expertise from a variety of sources, including the government, university and other groups.

"In the global economy, business models must adapt," says Bamber. "Market leadership, innovation, quality assurance, target marketing, these all require the type of collaboration and knowledge management that the Alberta Elk Centre will develop."

Besides the development needs of the industry, the Centre will also focus on animal care standards, product quality control and safety, and environmental sustainability.

"As a leading research institution, we have a responsibility to transmit and apply our knowledge for the uplifting of the whole community," adds Dr. Rod Fraser, President of the University of Alberta. "This innovative partnership between the University, government, and business will strengthen Alberta's competitiveness in the development of this significant industry. We are so pleased our researchers and students will be a part of it. This province is rapidly developing a climate where such partnerships can and do flourish for the betterment of all Albertans."

The Alberta Elk Centre is located at 4301 - 50 Street in Leduc. The partners will be hosting a Grand Opening on November 7, 2000. Producers, students, staff and the media are invited to attend. Details about the grand opening will be released at a later date.

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Barley producers invited to attend ABC meetings

Each November, the Alberta Barley Commission (ABC) directors hold meetings in their region with an open invitation for all barley producers in the area to attend and participate in the democratic process of running the organization. Producers who attend have the opportunity to hear informative speakers discuss issue of concern on topics such as agronomy, breakthroughs in research, market outlooks, updates on ABC's activities. It is also an great chance to get together with other area producers.

"Delegates elected last year, were elected for either a one- or two-year term," says Joy Sawyer, crop research and producer relations coordinator with ABC. "Delegates elected for a one-year term have the option of letting their names stand for re-election. Delegates elected this year will all be serving two-year terms."

This year, a director-at-large, as well as the two directorships for the northwestern Alberta regions 5 and 6 are up for election. Farmers standing for election for any of these positions welcome the support of other producers in their area. As the representatives, they will also appreciate hearing the views of all area producers on issues affecting barley producers. The elected representatives take these concerns and comments to the annual meeting in Calgary on November 29 and 30, 2000.

"We encourage all barley producers to plan to attend the meeting in their area and support their representatives," adds Sawyer. "Dates for these meetings have been set, and producers can certainly contact their local director or the Commission office for more information."

ABC Regional Meeting Dates:

Region 6	November 1	Region 3	November 6
Region 5	November 2	Region 2	November 7
Region 4	November 3	Region 1	November 10

Contact: Joy Sawyer
(403) 291-9111

Environmentally sustainable agriculture chair named at U of A

Dr. Les Fuller has been named as the Chair in Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (ESA) at the University of Alberta, a position created with the support of the Alberta government.

Fuller began his duties August 1, 2000. The position is supported for six years with $900,000 in funding from Agriculture Food and Rural Development.

"This is an important role in the future viability of the agriculture industry," says Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Alberta farmers have always been good stewards of the land, but with the rapid rate of change in technology today, the more informed and connected farmers can be to research, the better."

The ESA Chair will work closely with the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) Council, which is made up of members from the agriculture and food processing industry, environmental organizations and government.

Fuller's primary responsibilities include:

- research that proactively addresses the effects of agricultural practices on the environment and our natural resources,
- ensuring research information is passed on to the agricultural sector,
- integrating environmental sustainability with existing programs and courses at the University, and
- training new agriculture graduates in sustainable agricultural systems.

"The connection the Chair will create between the agriculture industry and the research community will benefit both," says Dr. Ian Morrison, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Home Economics.

Contact:	*Dr. Ian Morrison* *(780) 492-4931*	*John Hermans* *(780) 427-3908*

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Industry honours for Alberta dairy farmers

Two Alberta dairy farmers, Bill Kamps of Lacombe and Peter Schuld of Iron Springs will received the 2000 Provincial Dairy Award of Distinction from the Westerner Championship Dairy Showcase. The award is presented annually to an Alberta dairy farmer, businessperson or family who has made a major contribution to the dairy industry. The presentation will take place at the awards banquet on October 28, 2000 at Red Deer's Westerner Park in conjunction with the Westerner Championship Dairy Showcase, being held from October 28 to 30. The united Farmers of Alberta and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce are the main sponsors of this award program.

New on-line seed resource

Germination, a magazine of the Canadian seed industry, has launched a new on-line seed resource for farmers that will provide continual updates on varietal information and performance. The site also contains information on equipment, seed treatment and inoculants. Farmers can keep in touch with the most recent seed industry news, read features on a variety of seed-related topics and peruse the on-line classifieds and career sections of the website. As the website continues to grow and develop, an interactive farmers' forum is planned where farmers can take part in on-line discussions. ***Germination for Farmers*** is a partner of **Farms.com** and the address of the new site is <**www.germination.ca**>. For further information, contact Robynne Anderson or Simon Burgess at (204) 453-1965.

Fall Focus 2000

The 14th Fall Focus - a conference for farm women – is being held at the Camrose Regional Exhibition on November 8, 2000. General sessions include: Good grief - my life's a changin'; Celebrate our farm women; and Reaching your life goals. Additional sessions are also offered. For more information, or to receive a registration form, contact one of the Fall Focus 2000 committee members: Merry Archibald (780) 375-2378; Heather Broughton (780) 877-2481; Mildred Luz (780) 672-6426; Marion Pattison (780) 672-6389; Rosemary Snider (780) 855-2286; Maxine Anderson (780) 672-7242; Veronica Groeller (780) 878-3795; or Paula Bowal (780) 672-6719.

Albertans win Farm Writers awards

Five Alberta agricultural writers and broadcasters were the recipients of five national awards at the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation (CFWF) Annual Awards Competition held in Lethbridge on September 30, 2000. Awards went to: Dianne Finstad, RDTV, Red Deer, gold prize in the television news reporting category; Peggy Strankman and Cindy McCreath, Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Calgary, gold prize in the news release category; Tracey Feist, Ground Words Communications, Cochrane, silver prize in the news release category; and Janet Kanters, Trapper Enterprises, Strathmore, who received two silver awards, one for press feature and one for monthly press reporting. The awards competition was held in conjunction with the CFWF annual conference, that attracted approximately 100 farm writers and broadcasters from across Canada to the three-day event in Lethbridge. The 2001 CFWF conference will be held in New Brunswick. For further information on CFWF, contact Claudette Lacombe, president of the Alberta Farm Writers' Association at (403) 533-0008, e-mail <**umbel@telusplanet.net**>.

October 30, 2000

National 4-H Week – Celebrating our youth

Young Canadians across the county will be celebrating National 4-H Week from October 30 to November 5, 2000.

"4-H continues to make a difference in the lives of its members and the communities they live in," says Carol Sullivan, provincial 4-H media and marketing specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. 4-H also works to ensure that programs are designed to meet the challenges of the agriculture and food industry.

Alberta's 4-H program is a dynamic, client-focused organization dedicated to developing leadership, interpersonal and technical skills through a strong partnership of volunteers, industry and government. 4-H provides opportunities for youth and adult volunteers to become strong community leaders. 4-H'ers learn about the environment, conservation, technology, entrepreneurship, life skills and livestock. Each year Alberta's 4-H program provides a variety of programs for both members and leaders to participate in beyond their local club activities.

4-H summers are filled with camps, personal development and livestock programs for members of all ages.

"The Measures of Success study conducted in 1997 showed that youth who have participated in 4-H are better educated, more often employed and much more often employed in the agriculture and food industry. They report substantially higher incomes than the national average for Canadians and are also more involved in community organizations", adds Sullivan.

Wherever they live, in a town or the city, on a farm or an acreage, Alberta's youth belong in 4-H. There's something for everyone. To join 4-H or become a leader call(780) 422-4H4H or visit the 4-H web site at **<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/4h>**.

Contact: Kathy Hougham (780) 422-4H4H (4444)

Biodiversity – what is it and how is it measured

Biodiversity refers to the diversity of living things in any given area, and that includes plants, animals and organisms.

"Biodiversity means more than just species diversity," says Harry Stelfox, wildlife biologist with Alberta Environment. "Genetic diversity and ecosystem diversity is also very important. Working toward conserving healthy ecosystems, also helps safeguard genetic and species diversity."

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Internet site: www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agrinews Editor e-mail: agrinews@agric.gov.ab.ca

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) is a key program in Alberta that focuses on biodiversity and ecosystem diversity. While specifically working toward preserving and enhancing wetlands and areas of the province that support waterfowl populations, the work being done is also benefiting many other species of wildlife and plant life.

When measuring the biodiversity, it's important to establish species inventories so that counts can be compared over time and compared to other areas. Wildlife counts and bird counts are done by many organizations and individuals. Their information is essential to establishing estimated species counts within different areas of the province.

When estimating bird populations, measurements are determined using a fixed radius point count. This technique involves counting all birds seen or heard within a fixed distance (radius) of an observer within a set period of time. In 1993, radius point count procedures for grassland birds were standardized. Distances were set at 100 metres and count durations of five minutes provided enough time to observe all the birds within the fixed radius and at the same time minimizing the possibility of counting individual birds more than once. Each year, province-wide, the provincial bird count is completed. Information on these annual counts are available by contacting NAWMP or Alberta Environment.

Counting vegetation diversity is not just a good way to determine the number and diversity of plants and grasses but, is often a good indicator of animal diversity. One effective method of measuring vegetation diversity is by using the decimetre pole technique. Researchers randomly choose sample points and then vertically position a metal rod at each point. The number and variety of vegetation types growing at different heights along the metal rod is recorded, along with vegetation height and 'litter' depth. Litter in this instance is dead plant debris from previous years' growth. Types of vegetation are described using categories such as narrow grass, broad grass, shrub, forb and standing dead vegetation.

Another method that is used quite successfully uses a portable frame that is placed on the ground. The researcher estimates the percentage of bare ground and the percentage of grass, litter and forb cover inside the frame.

"Getting a handle on the health and diversity of our wildlands and rangelands is an important part of managing our resources," says Barry Adams, range management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lethbridge. "The biodiversity in the province is something Albertans take very seriously. Programs such as NAWMP and *Cows and Fish* have focused a lot of attention on biodiversity. Continued diligence and good management practices will go a long way in keeping Alberta home to its amazing number of mammals, reptiles, birds, fish and plants."

According to Alberta Environment counts and estimates, Alberta's landscapes support approximately: 90 species of mammals, 250 species of resident breeding birds, 50 species of fish, eight species of reptiles, 10 species of amphibians, 1,918 species of vascular plants, 475 types of mosses, 147 types of liverworts/hornworts, 767 different lichens, 454 species of fungi, hundreds of other primitive plant species, tens of thousands of insects and an unknown number of microbe and other invertebrate species.

NAWMP produces a semi-annual newsletter, ***Biodiversity Makes it Work***. For further information on the newsletter or to receive a copy, contact Brett Calverley, Alberta NAWMP coordinator, c/o Ducks Unlimited Canada, 200, 10720 - 178 Street, Edmonton, AB T5S 1J3 or e-mail **<b_calverley@ducks.ca>**.

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(403) 382-4299
Brett Calverley
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Phosphorus and water quality

People in many areas of the world are concerned about the overloading of nutrients in water, rivers, streams and coastal waters causing a reduction in water quality. When nutrients are present, algae grows and then decays, which using some of the oxygen in the water. This decay process is called eutrophication; *eu* (meaning normal and/or good) *troph/i* (meaning development and/or nourishment). While this is a naturally occurring process, excessive amounts of nutrients result in excessive amounts of algae. Nutrient overloading, results in a condition of water without oxygen, called hypoxia. Excessive eutrophication destroys many forms of aquatic life, including fish, due to hypoxia.

"In Alberta we want to believe that we have clean, pure water," says Dr. Colin McKenzie, research agronomist, Soil and Water, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South (CDCS), Brooks. "A 1998 publication ***Agricultural Impacts on Water Quality in Alberta – An Initial Assessment*** by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and the Canada/Alberta Sustainable Agriculture Agreement describes the present situation. This publication describes the status of water quality in Alberta and is based on sampling more than 700 streams, lakes and canals throughout the agricultural areas of Alberta."

In the streams tested and reported on in *Agricultural Impacts on Water Quality in Alberta*, the phosphorus (P) limits set by Canada Aquatic Guidelines were exceeded in 92 per cent of the samples. Nitrogen (N) levels set by the Canadian Aquatic Guidelines were also exceeded in 72 per cent of the stream samples. Phosphorus limits were exceeded in 16 per cent of irrigation water samples entering irrigation districts and 61 per cent of irrigation return flow samples.

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The question of where these nutrients come from and how to get rid of them, attracts the attention of agricultural scientists and ecologists. In 1998, S. Carpenter and others *(S. Carpenter, N.F. Caraco, D.L. Correll, R.W. Howarth, A.N. Sharpley and V.H. Smith. 1998. Impact of Agriculture on Water Quality. In Ecology #3)* wrote a report on the impact of agriculture on water quality:

- eutrophication caused by over-enrichment with phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) is a widespread problem in rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal oceans
- excess fertilization and manure production cause a P surplus that accumulates in the soil. Some of this surplus is transported in soil runoff to aquatic systems
- eutrophication of aquatic systems can be reversed by decreasing input rates of P and N. However, rates of recovery are highly variable and recovery is often slow

J. Lemnyon from Texas and T.C.Daniel (*J. Lemnyon, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Arlington, Texas and T.C. Daniel, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville,. 1998. In Soil Testing For Phosphorus, Environmental Uses and Implications. Published by SERA-IEG 17*) from Arkansas wrote: "Phosphorus is the single most important nutrient that must be managed if we are to control the accelerated eutrophication of fresh waters. Phosphorus is the limiting nutrient in upper fresh water portions and N in more saline regions." They are saying that excess algae growth in fresh water is caused by the amount of P in the water.

"In the past, livestock were kept in small herds in many areas and the resulting manure was applied to adjacent fields," adds McKenzie. "Now, large numbers of livestock are kept in one location. This means the manure needs to be dispersed or excess levels of phosphorus and nitrogen from the manure build up in soils and could be carried to adjacent water."

According to Senator Tom Harkin from Iowa (*Senator Tom Harkin. Dec., 1997. Animal Waste Pollution in America, an Emerging National Problem. Compiled by USA Senate Committee on Agriculture Nutrition and Forestry*):

- in one year, one beef cow produces the same amount of phosphorus (72 lbs of P2O5) as the urban sewage of 33 people
- one finishing pig produces the same amount of phosphorus as eight people

Based on Senator Harkins data, a feedlot of 10,000 cattle produces the same amount of phosphorus in manure as the sewage of a city of over 300,000 people. This amount of phosphorus (720,000 lbs produced by 10,000 cattle) is sufficient to replace the phosphorus removed by a typical crop on 14,000 acres of irrigated land (50 lbs/ac) or 36,000 acres of dryland (20 lbs/ac) in the dark brown soil zone of Alberta.

Cities are making progress toward reducing their contribution of phosphorus to water contamination. In 1987, Calgary commenced tertiary treatment of its sewage water. This means removal of most of the nitrogen and phosphorus in the water These nutrients are collected in the form of sludge that is applied to farmland near Calgary. Unfortunately, most cities and towns in Alberta do not yet have tertiary sewage treatments.

"Originally prairie soils had low levels of soil phosphorus and had the ability to store phosphorus," continues Dr. Ross McKenzie, senior research scientist, Soil fertility and Crop nutrition with Alberta Agriculture's Agronomy Unit, Lethbridge "But, phosphorus applications well in excess of crop needs will gradually saturate the soil's ability to hold phosphorus and then contribute to water contamination. Manure is often applied to the soil at rates to supply sufficient N to crops. However, in the process of collecting, storing and spreading manure, significant amounts of N can be lost to the air. The rates appropriate for N mean that P is applied at three to six times the rates needed by the crop depending on manure sources."

Many soils are receiving P applications from manure in excess of crop needs. Phosphorus P is a valuable crop nutrient and is deficient in over 80 per cent of soils in Alberta. For agriculture to be truly sustainable and surface water quality maintained, then the P in manure and fertilizer applications should not greatly exceed crop removals of this nutrient.

Ultimately, intensive livestock operators must apply manure based on the P content, rather than N content to be sustainable in the future. Some intensive livestock operations do not have the land base to do this. To overcome the problem of an insufficient land base, manure could be composted and transported to areas where soil levels are deficient in P. This would result in a "win - win- win" situation for intensive livestock operations, farmers that have P deficient soils and the environment!

Alberta Agriculture has developed a booklet titled ***Manure nutrient management: A balancing act***, authored by Barry Olson and Ross McKenzie. It contains practical worksheets that can be used as a planning guide to calculate sustainable manure application rates and land requirements needed for manure application. The approach is based on soil testing, manure testing and crop nutrient requirements. The philosophy behind this approach is that nutrient input from manure (or commercial fertilizer) must be balanced with crop nutrient uptake. This approach would go a long way to reduce potential contamination of soil and water. Copies of the booklet can be obtained by calling Ross McKenzie (403) 381-5842.

The solution to the problem of manure disposal lies in treating it as a valuable resource to be used judiciously rather than as a waste to be dumped.

Contact: R. Colin McKenzie
(403) 362-1347

Ross H. McKenzie
(403) 381-5842

Agri-Food 2000

A major meeting of agri-food researchers and professionals was held in Winnipeg on July 15 to 19, 2000. The Agri-Food 2000 conference was jointly organized by the Canadian Institute of Food Science and Technology, the Agricultural Institute of Canada, the Canadian Society of Agricultural Engineers, and the Flax Council of Canada.

"The conference was organized to allow significant interaction among the disciplines represented by the different societies," says Darcy Driedger, food scientist at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South (CDCS), Brooks. "Several joint events were held and participants were able to attend the technical sessions of all the societies. The potential of new technology to strengthen the agri-food industry was a recurring theme throughout the conference."

Highlights from the conference include:

- **high oxygen atmosphere to improve the quality of apple slices** – sliced apples normally develop surface browning very quickly when exposed to oxygen in the air, however, researchers from the Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre in Summerland, B.C., reported that very high levels of oxygen will actually inhibit browning. They described how apples exposed to a 100 per cent oxygen atmosphere for 5 to 19 days prior to slicing developed less surface browning than non-treated apples. No off-flavors were detected in the treated apples;
- **micronization of pulses** – several researchers from the University of Manitoba presented papers on the micronization of field peas and lentils. Micronization is a process where a tempered food product is exposed to infrared radiation that partially cooks the food product while drying it to a shelf-stable moisture level. Micronized pulses may have reduced cooking times;
- **sea buckthorn berry harvester** – the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, has developed a sea buckthorn berry harvester. This is significant because sea buckthorn plants have large spikes which make hand-picking impractical. The tractor-pulled harvester appeared to effectively remove the fruit with minimal damage to the tree. Information on the medicinal properties of sea buckthorn can be found on Alberta Agriculture's website at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/crops/special/buckthorn.html**>
- **agriculture in space** – the Space and Advanced Life Support Agriculture (SALSA) program at the University of Guelph is investigating the potential of higher plants to furnish food, oxygen, and water during long term space travel. The program works in partnership with Canadian, American, and European space agencies.

More information on Agri-Food 2000 can be found on the conference website <**www.agrifood2000.mb.ca**>.

Contact: *Darcy Driedger*
(403) 362-1339

Where do we go from here?

The 21st Century – Where Do We Go From Here? is the theme of the 23rd annual Farm Women's Conference. The conference is being held in Grande Prairie, at the Grande Prairie Inn, on November 16 and 17, 2000.

"Farm women were a 'multi-tasking' group of people long before the computer generation coined the phrase," says Cindy Cuthbert, client service representative with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and one of the conference organizers, Grande Prairie. "Keeping a farm or ranch humming along smoothly while raising a family, doubling as hired help at odd times and odd hours throughout the year, as well as keeping a hand in the community is pretty much the standard job description for farm women."

Each year, the Farm Women's Conference brings together speakers, seminars and workshops and makes the information and camaraderie available for Alberta farm women. This year's agenda includes educational sessions on computer software for farming, biotechnology, time controlled grazing, keeping a healthy horse and crime prevention. There are also sessions featured on complementary medicine, raising teenagers, getting along with family and coworkers, and giving the farmyard a facelift. As an added bonus, a little fun is thrown in with wine tasting, stained glass art and special Christmas time ideas, to round out the two-day event.

"Last year, over 120 women attended the conference," adds Cuthbert. "We are hoping to attract the same number, if not more women this year. The more farm women attending and networking together, the more value there is for all. Women benefit from the sharing and learning opportunities at this conference and will bring the benefits of this experience and new enthusiasm back to their farm business and communities."

Conference fee is $75 per person. For further information or to register, contact Cindy Cuthbert (780) 538-5285, Cindy Trudel (780) 359-2578, or Melinda Trudel (780) 494-2627.

Contact: *Cindy Cuthbert*
(780) 538-5285

Agri-News Briefs

Two new manure management videos

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has a pair of new videos on manure and nutrient management that are a must-see for anyone interested in this area. The first video, entitled ***Completing the Cycle: Nutrient Management***, stresses the importance of manure nutrients and emphasizes how it is the key to offsetting fertilizer costs, gaining a market advantage, and protecting soil, water and air quality. It focuses on how Alberta farmers are turning the problem of waste management into the profit of nutrient management, and shows how the nutrient cycle can maximize manure nutrients and increase the producer's bottom line. The second video is ***Manure and Riparian Management in the 21st Century***. The tape is a general awareness title, and discusses how to develop a sustainable manure management plan, how to monitor soil nutrient levels, assess runoff risk, and more. Both of these videos may be borrowed for free from any Alberta Agriculture Regional Advisory Services offices, or from the central Multi-Media Library, 7000-113 street, Edmonton. They are also available for sale from the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Each tapes costs $10 plus GST plus shipping and handling. For further information, contact Ken Blackley, information officer, Alberta Agriculture, (780) 422-3951.

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Agri-News

November 6, 2000

Alberta Grain Commission hosts CWB election forums

With the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) election period in full swing, the Alberta Grain Commission (AGC)will be hosting four candidate forums during the first week in November.

"The Alberta Grain Commission encourages all eligible voting producers to attend one of the forums," says Ken Moholitny, chairman of the AGC. "This is an excellent opportunity for farmers to meet the candidates, hear their platforms, and ask questions."

Since 1998, 15 board members have governed the activities and direction of the CWB. Farmers elect 10 of the 15 board members. Although there are 10 CWB electoral districts, the election this year occurs only in the even numbered districts. In Alberta, this will be CWB Districts 2 and 4. For more information on the election specifics, producers should call the election coordinator's (Meyers Norris Penney) information line (1-877-500-0795).

Two forums, facilitated by a third party, will be held in each of the two eligible election districts in Alberta.

District 4	Time	Location
November 8	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Cereal Community Hall
November 8	7:00 - 9:00 pm	Provost – Legion
District 2		
November 9	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Vulcan – Legion
November 9	7:00 - 9:00 pm	Red Deer – Capri Centre

Candidates wishing to participate in the forum are asked to contact the Alberta Grain Commission in Edmonton (780 427-7329).

Contact: *Brenda Brindle*
(780) 427-3077

Ken Moholitny
(780) 427-3078

This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Alberta 4-H judges at NILE

Four Alberta 4-H'ers traveled to Montana to compete in the Northern International Livestock Exposition (NILE) Livestock Judging Competition held in Billings Montana on October 18, 2000.

"Alberta 4-H judges did very well at the competition which involved over 400 contestants in three divisions," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton.

The Alberta team consisting of Trevor Hofstra, Leduc; Marla Float and Scott Richmond, Carstairs; and Anne Marie Wiltzen, Fort Saskatchewan competed in the Senior 4-H Division with over 110 other participants.

"Team Alberta finished in 11th place overall," says Henry Wiegman. "Ann Marie Wiltzen also placed 6th in Beef Judging. Alberta has consistently placed in the top third at this competition in the five years of competing at the NILE."

The 4-H members who traveled to the NILE won the right to represent Alberta at the Alberta Treasury Branches (ATB) Alberta 4-H Provincial Judging Competition held in Olds in August.

UFA - AgPro, ATB, and Alberta 4-H co-sponsor this judging award trip. Alberta, through the support of these sponsors and the Alberta 4-H Program Trust, also sends a team of eight judges to the Agribition International Multi Species Judging Competition, Regina Saskatchewan in late November, a team of eight judges to the Denver Colorado Western Regional 4-H Judging Competition in mid-January and a team of three judges to the Calgary Livestock Evaluation School in early June.

Alberta 2000 NILE Livestock Judging Team

*Top (l to r): **Marla Foat**, Carstairs; **Ann-Marie Wiltzen**, Fort Saskatchewan; Bottom (l to r): **Rick Stone**, Kitscoty (coach); **Scott Richmond**, Carstairs; **Trevor Hofstra**, Leduc, and **Charles Schoening** (coach) High River*

Contact: Henry Wiegman (780) 427-4532

Energy conservation and crop production conflicts

The tremendous, rapid rise in the price of natural gas over the past few months has hit greenhouse growers very hard. Many growers throughout the province have paid more for natural gas in the first six months of this year than they paid for the full year previous. The situation for growers is grim, with no apparent relief in sight.

"Growers have had little time to adjust to the rapid price increases and examine their options for the future," says Jim Calpas, greenhouse crops research and extension specialist at Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South (CDCS), Brooks. "The only short-term solution available has been to reduce energy consumption. However, this approach can have negative effects on crop performance."

One approach to reducing energy consumption is to grow at reduced temperatures, lower day and night temperatures with an overall lower 24-hour temperature average. Depending on the crop, optimum 24-hour temperatures generally range from 19.5 to 20 degrees C, and day/night temperature differences are generally only about five degrees C. This assumes that there is control over the maximum day time temperature, which can still get higher than the recommended optimum temperature on hot sunny days.

"As fall progresses and the ambient temperatures cool, growers have more temperature control of the greenhouse environments through heating," says Calpas. "Reducing the overall temperatures in the greenhouse can direct the plants to be overly vegetative resulting in reduced yields. In addition, growers also have to be aware that when the environment ramps from the night temperature to the day time temperature there is also the real possibility of condensation forming on the plants if the ramping is not accompanied by heating and venting."

Another approach to reduce energy consumption has been to lessen ventilation in an attempt to hold the heat in the greenhouse. The concern with this is that the humidity within the greenhouse rises and the plants eventually shut down as they have little room to release water into the greenhouse atmosphere through transpiration. If the plants have reduced transpiration, they also have reduced yields.

With both approaches growers have to also be concerned about disease problems if the relative humidity climbs above 80 per cent. Gray mould (*Botrytis cinerea*) does very well under conditions of cooler temperatures and periods of high relative humidity and can become a serious problem in the fall crop.

"When considering reducing energy consumption bear in mind that if crop performance is compromised, any savings on the gas bill can be lost in reduced yield and in disease control," adds Calpas. "There may be a time when it is possible to grow top-yielding crops at reduced temperatures, but this will likely involve different cultivars than are now grown and this approach is not currently recommended."

Growers should be considering energy saving strategies, and these will likely include the possibility of energy curtains above the canopy and even alternate sources of heating, such as coal. Alberta Agriculture is planning to hold two seminars in November that will present a number of the options available to growers. Speakers will include energy specialists from the Canadian Energy Research Institute and the Alberta Research Council, and production specialists and economists from Alberta Agriculture.

Greenhouse Energy Conservation Workshops

November 21	Gull Lake	Gull Lake Community Hall
November 24	Medicine Hat	Medicine Hat Lodge

The workshop fee is $10 per person. Registration in advance is required by calling (780) 422-1789 for the workshop being held in Gull Lake, or (403) 362-1300 for the workshop being held in Medicine Hat. Seating is limited, so please register early.

Contact: *Jim Calpas*
(403) 362-1300

New crop insurance cash advance available

Alberta Crop Insurance policy holders who have suffered major crop losses this year due to drought, frost, cutworms or other insurable losses can now apply for a cash advance on their 2000 crop insurance claim.

New processes are now in place to respond quickly to major crop loss situations, so crop insurance customers can receive a portion of their claim right away.

"A good example of the kind of situation we hope to address with this advance is the volume of crop insurance claims we are seeing now in southern Alberta," says Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Ty Lund. "With this year's drought in that area, the volume is about three times the normal. And at this time of year, when many trade accounts are due, an advance on verified claims can bring welcome relief for farmers."

Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), administers the Crop Insurance program. AFSC staff will contact south-region farmers who have already filed a claim to see if they wish to apply for an advance.

"We know there are cash flow challenges in many parts of the province," Lund adds. "Where it's reasonably clear that a claim is justified, we want to provide flexible options that respond to farmers' needs faster."

Farmers who choose to participate may receive up to 50 per cent of the loss indicated on their estimated Harvested Production Reports in advance. The remainder of the claim will be settled once a crop insurance adjuster visits the farm to verify and complete the claim.

Brian Manning, AFSC president and managing director, said farmers outside of southern Alberta will not automatically be contacted by AFSC, since most have not yet filed their Harvested Production Reports. Farmers from other parts of the province who are interested in a crop insurance cash advance may call AFSC to have their individual situation assessed.

"There's no additional paperwork to fill out, so the process has been greatly streamlined to be extremely responsive," says Manning. "After we get confirmation by phone or e-mail that the farmer wants an advance, a cheque should be on its way in about three days.

"The cash advance is an effective way to manage the bottleneck of on-farm claim adjustments that naturally occur when volumes are high. The quick response is possible through improved reporting from farmers and computer upgrades that speed up claim processing times."

A similar cash advance program for farmers applying under the Farm Income Disaster Program (FIDP) was recently announced. Farmers can now apply for FIDP assistance before filing their income tax return and can claim up to 50 per cent of their estimated eligible payments in the fall. The final FIDP application deadline for the 2000 crop year is July 31, 2001.

Farmers wishing to apply for cash advance under the Crop Insurance program can contact their local AFSC district office or call 1-800-396-0215. For FIDP cash advances, farmers can call 1-800-851-5070.

Contact: *Merle Jacobson*
Senior Manager, Insurance Services
Agriculture Financial Services Corporation
(403) 782-8229

For toll-free connection outside Edmonton, dial 310-0000.

Dairy industry to move to independent control

In order to facilitate moving governance of the province's dairy industry to an independent, democratically elected structure, the Alberta Dairy Control Board (DCB) has been replaced with an interim chair.

This is the first step in beginning implementation of recommendations outlined in an MLA report on dairy governance. Drayton Valley – Calmar MLA Tom Thurber conducted the review of dairy industry governance during the summer of 2000 at the request of Ty Lund, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Thurber met with dairy producers and processors from around the province during the review.

Currently, the DCB, a Crown corporation whose members are appointed by the Agriculture Minister, governs the dairy industry. The DCB maintains the regulatory system for supply management, allotting quota to producers and directing supply to processors.

"It is very clear from Tom Thurber's report that the dairy industry wants control over its own future," says Lund. "This is the only remaining agricultural sector still under Crown control. As the other sectors have shown, government is not needed to run this industry."

Brian Rhiness, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Industry Development Sector, Alberta Agriculture, has been appointed as interim chair and will administer the DCB during its transition to an elected body. Rhiness is the former general manager of the Agricultural Products Marketing Council.

This winter, Rhiness will oversee a democratic election process for a producer delegate body. This body will elect producer representatives to sit on the DCB and its Policy Advisory Committee. Processors will directly nominate or elect their representatives for both committees. Membership of both the DCB and the Policy Advisory Committee will be equally composed of producers and processors.

The new DCB and its Policy Advisory Committee will work with the Agricultural Products Marketing Council to accommodate the needs of the industry and to complete implementation of Thurber's recommendations for a long-term legislative and regulatory framework.

"Self-management will help the dairy industry build on its successes and find more effective ways to work together for growth," says Lund. "I am hopeful that this process can be completed within the next 12 to 18 months."

Through the transition, the dairy industry will continue to operate under existing legislation. Dairy producers will not see a reduction in service.

Contact: Michael Lohner
Office of the Minister
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
(780) 427-2137
Brian Rhiness
(780) 427-2442

Government numbers are toll-free in Alberta by dialing 310-0000, first.

Collection of human resource management sites available

A collection of website addresses, providing a broad spectrum of information on human resource management, has been assembled by the business and human resource development team of Agricultural Business Management Branch, Olds.

"Each website was reviewed and evaluated for relevance to an agricultural business context," says Doug Barlund, business management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Olds. "This eliminates a lot of work for the user. Each website has been evaluated for level of detail, ease of use, Canadian content, useful links, applicability to the agriculture industry and quality of HR diagnostic tools. This is sort of like putting our 'Siskel & Ebert' rating on them for worthiness."

To make it easy to use this listing, the sites have been classified into 10 groupings: leadership; managing change; teamwork; job design; staffing; training & career development; employee appraisal; compensation & benefits; labour relations; and, on-line HR publications."

"We hope that when Albertans need to upgrade their knowledge of various HR functions and processes, they will first visit the list,"adds Barlund. "For example, if you were considering hiring a manager for your farm business, you could get some great ideas from the *Staffing Selection* area where there's a site <**http://www.aspentree.com/**> that lists 36 management competencies that could help guide the direction of the interview process and get you closer to finding the right person for your business situation."

The collection of HR management sites can be accessed by going to <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/business/hr/directory/inde x.html**>.

Contact: Doug Barlund
(403) 556-4245

Fall application of fertilizer

Every year there are questions about fall application of fertilizers. New articles and information can appear to contradict previous information. Determining whether or not fall application is a good idea, depends on a number of factors that each producer needs to consider.

"The first influencing factor is the amount of moisture you expect to receive," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Wetaskiwin. "Some old data show that fall application can actually be more effective than material put down in the spring in dry areas. It is probably because there is little to cause loss of nutrients over winter and any tillage in the spring tends to dry out a soil that is already limited in moisture. In higher moisture areas, there is usually some loss of nitrogen and other mobile elements over winter, but those losses may be offset by cheaper product costs in the fall and timeliness of operations in the spring."

Fertilizer placement affects the rate of nutrient loss. Losses are smallest when fertilizer is in a tight band and increases with more soil contact. Of course, fertilizer losses have to be balanced against cost and convenience of application.

"To understand the amount of loss you will have over winter, you have to have some understanding of the types of losses that can occur," adds Hockridge. "Excess water that moves through or over the soil takes nutrients with it. Standing water and cool conditions lead to denitrification losses. Warm weather increases losses from volatilization - especially if fertilizer is lying on the surface."

The type of tillage system used has an influence beyond the loss of nutrients. Producers using a minimum tillage system want to maintain soil consistency that will inhibit weed germination and keep a duff layer on the surface. The soil profile they want relies on little or no tillage for a prolonged period of time. They also want to save money on fuel costs.

"Research information helps put numbers to the problem under specified situations," says Hockridge. "Banded fertilizer in a dry soil, applied late in the fall will probably have only a five per cent loss over winter. Excess moisture, early fall application and surface application may increase this to 30 per cent.

"The decision on fall fertilizer purchases is even more critical this year. The cost of the inputs into making some types of fertilizer (namely natural gas) have risen substantially. It seems to make sense that the increases will be reflected in the fertilizer prices before spring. Locking in a price by some means may be more important than the tricks Mother Nature is likely to pull on us by spring."

Contact: *Ron Hockridge*
(780) 361-1240

Committee to resolve remaining livestock operations issues

A new committee will finalize provincial recommendations on outstanding issues related to the development and operation of Alberta's livestock industry.

The committee, chaired by Albert Klapstein, MLA for Leduc, will recommend a framework that ensures sustainable industry development. They will examine issues including provincial and municipal roles, approval processes and on-going monitoring and enforcement.

Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, said the committee will complement the work of the Livestock Regulations Stakeholder Advisory Group who presented a report to the Minister last May.

"We will not be revisiting the work undertaken by the Advisory Group," says Lund. "The report was scientific and very thorough but a few issues still have to be addressed. This is the final step we must take to iron out those issues so that we can complete our provincial strategy."

The committee also includes producer Ben Thorlakson and Roelof Heinen, former president of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties.

Lund said members of the livestock industry and other Albertans want these issues resolved as soon as possible. The Minister has asked the committee to report within six months, allowing for prompt action while giving the committee sufficient time to address the issues.

"This is a very important issue," says Lund. "The livestock industry is a vital part of the provincial economy. We must put together a comprehensive strategy for the long term, ensuring that it is right for sustainability of the industry and our environment."

In the meantime, Alberta Agriculture staff and stakeholders will continue to modernize the Code of Practice for the Safe and Economic Handling of Manures and beneficial management practices guidelines.

Contact:	*Albert Klapstein*	*Michael Lohner*
	MLA, Leduc	*Office of the Minister*
	Committee Chair	*Alberta Agriculture*
	(780) 415-0989	*(780) 427-2137*

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Facts on Alberta's Dairy Industry

- There are 1000 dairy producers in Alberta and the value of their raw milk totals $348 million annually
- there are 22 processing plants in Alberta, owned and operated by 14 companies
- the wholesale value of processed dairy products is $700 million annually
- all Alberta produced milk is processed in Alberta
- Alberta is the third largest dairy province in Canada, holding 6.3 per cent of the Canadian industrial milk quota and producing 7.8 per cent of Canada's milk supply
- the Dairy Board Act sets out the regulatory powers for the Dairy Control Board to control and regulate the sale of milk in Alberta
- the Dairy Control Board sets up marketing procedures to ensure sufficient milk supply to meet consumer demand at a relatively stable price. The Dairy Control Board acts as the industry referee by providing an appeal mechanism for producers, processors, consumers and government
- the Energy and Utilities Board sets the minimum prices for fluid milk paid to producers.
- Alberta's 16 other producer organizations are managed under the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act.

Brand inspection

On November 1, 1998, brand inspection duties were transferred from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to the private sector through a Delegation Agreement. The not-for-profit company that now provides this service is called Livestock Identification Services Ltd. (LIS) and is headquartered at Suite 375, South Centre Executive Tower, 11012 McLeod Trail South, Calgary, Alberta, T2J 6A5. On November 1, 2000, the Stettler brand office will be closed and those functions will be moved into the Calgary LIS office. The minister of Alberta Agriculture is still responsible for the legislation, but brand inspection and related services are delivered by LIS. Cliff Munroe, head of regulatory services branch with Alberta Agriculture, is the Secretariat and ex-officio member of the LIS Board. His responsibilities include ensuring LIS completes the terms in the Delegation Agreement and properly administers the four Acts and associated Regulations: *Brand Act; Livestock Identification and Brand Inspection Act; Livestock and Livestock Products Act; Stray Animals Act*. All enquiries related to brand inspection or these acts and regulations should be directed through Ken Weir, general manager of LIS (403) 509-2088, fax (403) 509-2098. Munroe can be reached at (780) 422-7249 and fax (780) 427-1437.

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The Business of Functional Foods

Functional foods are foods that may provide a health benefit beyond basic nutrition. Some examples include oat bran and whole wheat. The belief that food has health benefits other than nutritional value is reaching new heights among consumers and scientists alike. The interest has opened the door for a new category of foods with health promoting attributes, known as functional foods.

"Within its nutrition value-added focus, industry is moving away from, what a food product does not have, towards what a food product does have," says Connie Phillips, food scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Leduc. "Driving this move is increasing consumer interest in nutrition and in taking control of their own health; scientific support for the role of diet in health promotion and disease prevention; technical advances in the food industry that make it possible to combine health value with high-quality products; an aging population; and, increasing health care costs, currently estimated at $1.8 billion in Canada."

The Business of Functional Foods seminar is slated for Edmonton on March 5, 2001. It's an opportunity to hear about opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs interested in the area of functional foods.

Alberta Agriculture has partnered with Functional Foods Alberta Centre of Excellence and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to present a unique agenda comprised of provincial, national and international speakers.

Topics for discussion on the agenda include:

- The Nutraceutical Revolution
- Bioactive Compounds from Canadian Commodities
- The Nutraceutical Value of Canadian Flax
- The European Perspective on Nutraceuticals and Functional Foods
- Health Claims and Company Strategies
- Establishing Health Benefits of Foods: From Concepts to Claims
- Cash Creation for Small Companies
- E-Commerce
- Technical Resources for Product and Process Development

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Albertans interested in any of these aspects of the growing industry of functional foods will want to attend *The Business of Functional Foods* seminar.

The ***Growing Global Conference*** immediately follows the seminar on March 5 to 7, 2001 in Edmonton. The three-day conference will cover topics related to medicinal and aromatic plants and organics.

Contact:	*Kevin Swallow*	*Connie Phillips*
	(780) 980-4870	*(780) 980-4865*

Waste management trial shows promising results

Waste management plans are a big priority for operations like Northlands Park in Edmonton, where approximately 14,000 tonnes of bedding material are generated every year from the barns. Looking for management options, Northlands began working with Ecomark Ltd. in 1999 to develop a process to use the bedding material to improve agricultural soils.

"This initiative resulted in a joint composting pilot project developed in cooperation with Bill Prins of Prins Feedlot near Gibbons," explains Carrie Selin, provincial program specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton.

Prins Feedlot provided the site, equipment and labour for the composting project, as well as raw feedlot manure. Project partners include Northlands, Prins Feedlot, Agrium, Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Program, Ecomark Ltd., and County of Sturgeon.

"After receiving approval for the waste management plan and site, the pilot project was set up at the feedlot," says Selin. "The trials consisted of 10 piles containing different mixtures of composting materials, including Northlands bedding material, raw feedlot manure and chicken manure."

The trials compared piles of single types of raw material, to piles of combinations, such as raw feedlot manure mixed with bedding material. The trial windrows were 10 m long, 2 to 3 m wide, and 1 to 1.5 m high. Phosphogypsum, supplied by Agrium, was also added to some of the trial piles to determine whether the addition would enhance composting and reduce odour.

"We focused the process on technology that farmers would have readily available, and used a front-end loader for turning the piles," explains Paul Schouten, formerly a biologist with Ecomark Ltd. "The piles were turned every two weeks. Phosphogypsum, a dry powdery product, was added to the compost piles at a rate of 20 per cent by weight of the compost mixture at the beginning of the trials."

"During the pilot project, various measurements and observations were made," says Selin. "Data loggers measured temperature twice an hour and provided an average temperature at the end of the day for each pile. Odour and other physical aspects of the compost piles were also recorded."

The pilot project has just finished and data analysis is underway. The economic analysis will be completed this winter. The final results and analysis for the pilot project should establish which materials result in optimal compost mixes.

Preliminary results show that composting on-site, and including phosphogypsum to reduce odours during the processing, can be a benefit. Composting reduces the volume and results in an effective soil amendment. When compared to spreading raw manure, the composted product contains more readily available nutrients and has no odour when spread.

Some mixtures with higher carbon/nitrogen ratios composted much more quickly and should result in a better end product than individual raw materials. The relative amounts of carbon (C) and nitrogen (N) affect the composting process.

With the success of the pilot, project partners have decided to develop a second phase. "All project partners are interested in continuing the project and conducting some field trials with the different types of compost developed in the pilot project," says Schouten. "The goal is to evaluate the differences in the compost mixtures as a soil amendment by looking at the whole process. We want to determine differences not only in soil chemistry and soil physical properties, but also in the soil fauna or biology."

Schouten is hoping the project will be extended for five years, to get good measurable results. The results will be shared with farmers.

Contact:	*Carrie Selin*	*Ecomark Ltd.*
	(780) 427-3587	*(780-) 444-0706*

Farm Direct Marketing in Alberta

The Alberta Farmers' Market Association and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development are hosting Explore Direct, a conference exploring opportunities for marketing rural Alberta products directly to consumers. The conference will be held at the Nisku Inn, Nisku, on February 26 and 27, 2001.

At the Explore Direct conference, Albertans interested in farm direct marketing will meet and share ideas with other farm direct marketers. It will be an opportunity to strengthen marketing skills, expand networks and explore winning alternatives in marketing directly to consumers.

Two pre-conference workshops will be held the morning of February 26 with the main conference commencing in the afternoon. The wide variety of information sessions are planned around three general streams of interest: marketing techniques and tools, management issues and direct marketing methods. The program, that includes ample time for networking, also features a Rural Fare reception showcasing food products marketed direct to the consumer and the Alberta Farmers' Market Association annual general meeting.

For more information on the Explore Direct conference, contact Betty Vladicka, the Alberta Agriculture conference co-chair, at (780) 422-1789.

Registration brochures are available at all Alberta Agriculture district offices.

Contact:	*Karen Goad* *(780) 538-5285*	*Kerry Engel* *(780) 349-4465*
	Linda Hawk *(403) 529-3616*	

Government numbers are toll free in Alberta by first dialling 310-0000

Thinking about agriculture – strategically

Do you have a clear sense of what your farm business is about and where it is heading? How is agriculture changing? Considering these changes, how will your business change?

"Agriculture has always had its challenges, but it was a lot simpler when the farm was smaller, there wasn't so much money involved, there were no employees, markets were less volatile, there were fewer regulations, and less complex technology," says Douglas Duff, management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Olds.

"Looking ahead to the challenges of farming in the 21st century, the reality is that agriculture has and is expected to continue experiencing change at unprecedented levels. Understanding more complex farm and agricultural business issues requires new management skills."

The Agricultural Business Management Branch of Alberta Agriculture, and its partners Olds College and the Tiffin Conference Series, Lethbridge Community College are presenting two one-day seminars called ***Thinking About Strategy.*** The seminars feature Dr. Michael Boehlje, professor of agricultural economics, Purdue University. Joining Boehlje, are two well know agricultural entrepreneurs, Tom Droog, of Alberta Sunflower Seeds Ltd. and SPITZ and David Price of Sunterra Farms Ltd.

As Boehlje explains, "In the past, it has been critical that management develop methods that allow the farm to achieve a cost of production better than the industry average. The continual introduction of new products/technologies for use on farms has provided significant rewards for concentrating on production or *doing things right*. With the continued industrialization of farming, success will continue to require that operations be efficient, but there will be a growing payoff to strategic decisions or *doing the right thing*."

The focus of strategic thinking is to clarify what is really important in terms of: what the business owner wants to do; what the business needs to do in order to compete and survive; and, what the business is capable of doing. It is not about predicting the future, but rather making better decisions based on business success and long term survival.

"Identifying the skills to bring strategic planning into a business is a great value, but putting the theory into action is the true test of management capabilities," adds Dann Mattson, management specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Olds. "Tom Droog and David Price will describe the strategic processes that resulted in the vertical integration of a farm business and developing and marketing differentiated agri-food products."

Farm managers who want to enhance their strategic planning skills will want to attend these seminars being held at Alumni Centre, Olds College on December 13, 2000 (call 1.800.661.6537 to register) and The Barn, Lethbridge Community College, December 14, 2000 (call 1.800.572.0103 to register). The cost of the seminar is $100 and pre-registration is requested.

Contact:	*Dann Mattson* *(403) 556-4248*	*Douglas Duff* *(403) 556-4326*

Taking the mystery out of market research

Entrepreneurs considering starting a new agriculture enterprise stand a far better chance of success if some market research is done before hand. It's advisable to know who the customers will be before seeds are planted, livestock herds are diversified, a new food product is processed and packaged or a bed & breakfast is opened. It's imperative to match estimated sales volume to the market, plan ahead and anticipate what you can sell. There's nothing worse than producing a new crop, raising an animal or processing a new dessert product only to find out you can't sell it!

"If you've considered a new enterprise you will have had someone – a lender, an investor or a business development specialists tell you to do market research," says Joyce Lencucha, agri-food development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Red Deer. "Market research is a process of asking questions or finding existing information about the market, your competition and potential customers."

Before starting a new venture, you need answers to questions such as:

- will someone buy this product?
- are there enough customers for me to make money?
- how can I reach those potential buyers?
- is someone else already fulfilling my potential customers needs?

"There is no magic to market research," adds Lencucha. "It's not a crystal ball that can predict future sales with certainty. Research provides information to help project future trends and plan a marketing program."

For many, the hardest part of market research is getting started. Alberta Agriculture is offering a one-day workshop called ***Taking the Mystery Out of Market Research*** in Wetaskiwin on November 29, 2000 and Red Deer on November 30, 2000.

Participants of the workshop will:

- learn from facilitator Nancy Kindler, Full Course Strategies. Kindler has 20 years experience as a marketing and sales professional in the food service hospitality and tourism industry
- hear from a panel of producers and processor as they share their practical experiences in doing market research
- check out business resources and directories available through the library – both books and interests
- network with other producers and processors

For further information on the workshop or to register, contact Lencucha in Red Deer at (403) 340-5338 or Marian Williams in Camrose at (780) 679-1210.

Contact: *Joyce Lencucha* *(403) 340-5338*

Marian Williams *(780) 679-1210*

Raising fish in a pond or dugout

Raising fish in your pond or dugout is a course for anyone interested in raising fish for recreational purposes. The course, organized by Alberta Fish Farmers Association in cooperation with Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development, will provide an overview of specific requirements to raise fish.

"Course topics include selecting a site and constructing a fish pond; licencing requirements; purchasing fish and supplies; feeding; water quality; aeration; and, disease, predator and weed control," says Eric Hutchings, aquaculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Lethbridge. "There will be speakers from the Alberta Fish Farmers Association and Alberta Agriculture who will relate specialized knowledge and direct experience to the workshop."

In addition to classroom instruction, participants will have the opportunity to view various fish culture and aeration equipment, and speak directly with the industry representatives. This can include commercial fingerling suppliers, licencing inspectors and department staff from Animal Industry's Aquaculture Section.

This course is planned to be held at 20 different locations throughout Alberta each year.

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Raising Fish in your Pond or Dugout" is a three hour course scheduled at 20 centres in 2001. Dates, locations, and tentative times for the scheduled year 2001 courses are:

Jan 23	Drayton Valley	6:30 pm
Jan 24	Sangudo	6:30 pm
Jan 25	Leduc	6:30 pm
Jan 30	Namao	6:30 pm
Jan 31	Athabasca	6:30 pm
Feb 1	Vegreville	6:30 pm
Feb 6	Josephburg	6:30 pm
Feb 7	Bonnyville	6:30 pm
Feb 8	Vermilion	6:30 pm
Feb 13	Camrose	6:30 pm
Feb 14	Stettler	6:30 pm
Feb 15	Oyen	1:00 pm
Feb 20	Calgary – south (Red Deer Lake Hall)	6:30 pm
Feb 21	Airdrie	6:30 pm
Feb 22	Three Hills	1:00 pm
Feb 27	Lethbridge	6:30 pm
Feb 28	Brooks	6:30 pm
March 1	Pincher Creek	6:30 pm
March 6	Spirit River	6:30 pm
March 7	Falher	1:00 pm

Attendance will be limited by seating capacity. Courses with less than 10 pre-registrants will be cancelled. Cost of the course is $35.00 (including GST). A manual is provided to registrants and contains additional materials not covered in class. Please make your cheque payable to the ***Alberta Fish Farmers Association*** and include the following completed registration form.

Details on course registration should be directed to the sponsoring district office of Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development.

For information about this or other aquaculture related courses, contact Hutchings at (403) 381-5574. Phone toll free by dialing 310-0000 and then the number.

Contact: *Eric Hutchings*
(403) 381-5574

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Agri-News Briefs

Alberta people-related trends

A new book, titled ***Alberta People: Trends and Projections***, features over 60 trends affecting the population of Alberta. Author, Roger Sauve of People Patterns Consulting of Okotoks, has grouped the trends into eight main categories for ease of study. These are: the basics of population growth; the economic realities; workers and workplaces; the joys of education; change on the home front; incomes and savings; spending, culture and sports; health and safety. Sauve's book reveals some interesting trends and reflections. For example, the book identifies two future impacts, the rapidly ageing population over the next decade and the looming worker shortage in a very few years. Also, although a typical worker earned $622 per week in 1999 compared to $457 in 1988, this 36 per cent increase is offset by a 34 per cent increase in the consumer price index over the same period. That means that the real average weekly earnings increased only two per cent from 1988 to 1999. Sauve indicates that unless earnings improve, more employee-employer conflicts are likely in the next few years. For further information on this new book, contact Sauve at 403-938-0071 or e-mail: **<rsauve@telusplanet.net>**.

New cattle-handling video available

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's multi-media branch has updated its popular ***Cattle Handling*** video. "In addition to being an update, the new version has a different focus," says Ken Blackley, information officer with the multi-media branch, Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton. "The original video was about using cattle psychology to design a proper facility. This new version focuses more on using cattle psychology as a key to proper handling procedures, although it does also look at facility design as well." The 20-minute tape suggests handling procedures and facility construction should be based on how the animal thinks, and how it views its environment. Using this approach can help make handling faster, safer and less labour-intensive. The new video may be borrowed for free from an Alberta Agriculture Regional Advisory Services office, or from the central Multi-Media Library, 7000-113 street, Edmonton. It is also available for sale from the Publications Office, 7000-113 street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. The video costs $25 (plus GST) and shipping and handling $2 (plus GST). For further information, contact Blackley at (780) 422-3951.

ACC meeting in Wetaskiwin

The Alberta Canola Commission (ACC) is teaming up with Parkland Fertilizers to bring the zone meeting to Wetaskiwin on November 22, 2000. Along with the normal reports, the day will be packed with information. Commodity commissions were set up in the late 1980's and early 1990's as a means of collecting money for research and promotion specific to that commodity. Everyone selling canola contributes to the commission, it is their organization. Zone meetings and the annual meeting are held to tell farmers what they are getting for their money. This year's program offers a mix of high profile speakers from the public sector and several private company representatives. Highlights of the meeting include presentations by Phil Thomas, who will give a general canola production update; Matt Machielse, marketing economist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, will give an analysis of where the market is going, and Dr. Gary Stringam, a professor at the University of Alberta and head of the U of A canola breeding program, will give a GMO (genetically modified organism) update and talk about breeding cold tolerance into canola. The Alberta Canola Commission Zone Meeting/Parkland Fertilizer *Agvantage* Canola Production Seminar will be held at the Reynolds-Alberta Museum. The registration fee of $10 includes lunch. For more information or to register, contact Parkland Fertilizers at (780) 352-3359.

Agri-News

November 13, 2000

Choose cattle wintering sites carefully

Manure is a valuable source of nutrients for growing crops on the farm. However, manure also contains nutrients, organic matter and microorganisms that can contaminate water sources.

"In some areas a fairly common practice for cattle producers is to feed and bed cattle in low sheltered areas beside creeks, rivers, lakes or dugouts," says Bob Buchanan, agricultural water specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Leduc. "The manure accumulation at these sites can contribute contaminated runoff to these water sources during spring snowmelt or heavy rainfall events. Cattle with unrestricted access to water sources can contaminate them with manure and sediment trampled in from the stream banks. Cattle that are allowed continuous access to streams for watering and grazing will eventually destroy all the rooted vegetation along the stream banks and that can lead to serious stream bank erosion. The sediment deteriorates water quality and riparian habitat for fish and other aquatic life. Some Alberta studies have shown that even small cow-calf operations with fewer than 50 cow-calf pairs can impact water quality."

Nutrients like phosphorus from manure can rapidly increase the algal growth in dugouts, lakes and rivers. For example there is enough phosphorus in one cow's manure for one day to cause a significant algal bloom in one million litres of dugout water. This is why the quality of dugout water can rapidly deteriorate when cattle are allowed direct access to a water source. When algae die and decompose, dissolved oxygen in water can be depleted and cause fish kills. Decomposing algae can also generate offensive taste and odour problems in water. Blue green algal toxins can be fatal to livestock.

Water sources contaminated with manure contain faecal coliform bacteria and may have other disease-causing microorganisms such as cryptosporidium and giardia. These microorganisms are a threat to public health and reduce weights and cattle productivity.

"Several factors influence the management and environmental suitability of a cattle wintering site," adds Buchanan. "Some physical characteristics such as slope, soil type, water table and climate are beyond the producers control. Factors that can

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be managed include cattle density, runoff control, feeding method and location of water supply. Whenever possible, try to pick a wintering site away from water sources and where little or no runoff flows down through the site. Also set up an alternative water supply to protect the water source."

Contact: *Bob Buchanan*
(780) 986-8985

Plan ahead for 2001

There are many concerns being voiced by Alberta producers that point to the necessity of planning ahead for 2001. Farmers are concerned about the dry weather experienced in many areas in 2000, making them wonder what dryland pasture will be like. Many farmers are saying that traditional crops don't pay the bills; they are having difficulties getting contracts for special crops; and, they are concerned about the cost of energy and the cost of getting into new crops.

"What all of these agricultural concerns mean, is that there needs to be a lot of planning time spent to make the best of 2001," says Gordon Frank, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Brooks. "We can't predict the future, but given the current information it is clear that some adjustments need to be made. It will be important to consider doing some careful cost cutting."

Some costs saving practices and decisions could include:

- more competitive varieties like barley can save on herbicide compared to wheat
- green feed or silage may eliminate the need for weed control and allow for underseeding in case grazing is needed
- crops, such as flax, take less fertilizer nutrients than crops like canola
- use soil tests and crop-nutrient-use tables to help be more precise on the fertilizer being applied
- grow nitrogen fixing crops such as peas, alfalfa, beans or other legumes
- make the most of crop rotation
- don't leave perennial legumes, such as alfalfa, in too long
- follow legumes with high nitrogen users like high protein wheat. Fertilizer can be reduced even in the second year after a legume

"One cost saving practice is to start to using reduced tillage," says Frank. "As well as saving on tractor fuel costs, there will be a reduction in machinery wear and tear. Once a mulch layer is established, the evaporation will be reduced and rain and snow melt become more efficient. This improves chances of a crop on dryland and reduces the amount of water needed for irrigation."

It's always prudent to watch for chances to diversify. Diversification can spread the risk. Livestock can offset low grain price cycles, use crop aftermath and provide fertilizer savings if manure is recycled. Save some of land for high value, low volume crops like alfalfa seed, grass seed, high protein hard wheat instead of feed wheat. This saves harvesting costs, trucking costs and storage costs. Consider winter cereals, they're an underrated crop.

"Don't limit your scope of consideration to these points," says Frank. "Try adding to these ideas as you plan ahead for 2001."

Contact: *Gordon Frank*
(403) 362-1212

Lomond leader chosen for 4-H Hall of Fame

Marie Logan from Lomond was named the 2000 inductee to the Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame as part of the preparations leading up to National 4-H Week, October 30 to November 5, 2000.

"Marie Logan believes that enriching the lives of children and youth in the community helps farm families and communities grow and survive," says Minister Ty Lund, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "She has demonstrated this philosophy in her more than 25 years as a 4-H leader."

Logan was a member of the Lomond 4-H club for eight years and won many livestock and public speaking awards. As a leader, she has nurtured public speaking skills, responsibility and team work in her members. The Lomond 4-H club continues to be innovative, offering many projects, including the new drama project.

At the 4-H District and Regional council level, Logan has worked on many committees that planned workshops and special events, organized Achievement Days, club exchanges and a farm safety camp. She is currently the 4-H Key Leader for the Vulcan District.

Logan's tenure on the Alberta 4-H Council began in 1991 and continued through an era of challenges and triumphs. She has served in several executive positions including President and on several committees. As a member of the 4-H Foundation of Alberta, Logan's commitment to the future led her to initiate development of the Alberta 4-H Millennium Fund.

In addition to her 4-H activities, Logan has extended her volunteer efforts to many other aspects of agriculture and rural development in her community. She was appointed to the design team of the Ag Summit 2000 and was a member of the Agriculture Sector Team for the Alberta Growth Summit. Logan strives to realize her vision of equal access to information and technology for all Albertans. This is evident

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through her participation on three volunteer library boards, including her current position as chair of the Chinook Arch Regional Library Board. As chair of the Save-Our-School committee, Logan was instrumental in retaining the Lomond High School. She also currently sits as chair of the Horizon School Board, which is responsible for 30 schools in southern Alberta.

This 1995-96 Farm Woman of the Year and her husband Glenn are partners in Wheatcrest Farms, an irrigation and dryland pedigreed seed farm along with a cow-calf operation and feedlot. Their son and daughter were both active 4-H'ers.

Logan will be officially inducted into the Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame at the Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference Banquet in Red Deer on January 13, 2001.

Contact:	*Penny Wilkes* *(780) 422-4H4H (4444)*	*Marie Logan* *(403) 792 3696*

Government numbers are toll free in Alberta by first dialing 310-0000

Colourful canola

The edible oil market demands a light coloured, clear oil product that is stable and has acceptable taste. Variances in colour can make a big difference in the price received for canola seed.

"Green canola is a major degrading factor and is of prime importance to farmers," says Murray Hartman, cereal and oilseed specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Innisfail. "The green colour of frozen or immature canola seed is due to chlorophyll. Once oil is extracted from green canola seed, the chlorophyll in the oil rapidly changes to a reddish brown compound called pheophytin. Canola crushed from green seed will have both green and reddish tinges and require bleaching. Chlorophylls and pheophytins reduce the hardening of oil for margarine processing, increase the rate of rancidity and cause poor flavor."

Maturity is a major factor influencing the amount of chlorophyll is in canola seed. Variety selection, seeding date/rate/depth, alternaria black spot control and time of swathing give producers some control over maturity and green seed, but frost occurrence can't be controlled.

"The question on many producers' mind is whether or not canola seed will de-green during storage," says Hartman. "The answer is no, although there can be a very small amount of de-greening that varies with moisture and temperature."

De-greening in canola seed is mainly a biological process. There are two enzymes in canola seed that degrade chlorophyll. As with most biological processes, increased temperatures and moisture speed up activity. The effect of frost on immature seed is to physically disrupt the enzymes and dehydrate the seed. The result is reduction or termination of enzyme activity and de-greening.

"Re-wetting non-frosted green seed can rehydrate the enzymes and de-greening could resume," adds Hartman. "However, the U of A found that the moisture needed for reactivation of the enzymes is higher than that needed to start germination. Because of this, rehydration to stimulate de-greening doesn't offer great potential."

Studies conducted by Swedish researchers 30 years ago supply some useful information on the effects of moisture and storage temperatures on chlorophyll levels. In the test conducted, higher temperatures and moisture levels during three weeks of storage without artificial drying, resulted in some chlorophyll reduction. The researchers discovered that more than 25 per cent moisture in the canola seed was needed before significant declines in chlorophyll content occurred. Also, storage temperatures of 10 to 20 degrees C were better than cooler temperatures.

"When looking at these testing results, producers need to remember that damp canola grain and warm temperatures are prime spoiling conditions," says Hartman. "These moist warm conditions would make this practice very risky."

Additional research has reported that some chlorophyll reduction in immature canola can be prompted if canola is ventilated during drying or storage.

Research in Manitoba has shown that canola seeds dried rapidly contains 1.5 to 6 times more chlorophyll than seed allowed to mature in the swath. It has also been found that the smallest seeds have the highest chlorophyll content.

"The best practice for minimizing green seed is still early planting and timely swathing at 30 per cent colour change," says Hartman.

Contact: *Murray Hartman*
(403) 227-6565

Horse Breeders and Owners Conference

Each year in Alberta, the Horse Industry Section of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development organizes the ***Alberta Horse Breeders and Owners Conference***. The 2001 conference is being held on January 12, 13 and 14, 2001 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer. This premier horse conference, the only one of its kind in Canada, is conducted by the Horse Industry Section of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the Alberta Quarter Horse Breeders Group and the Canadian Thoroughbred Horse Society - Alberta Division, with major sponsorship from the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

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"The 2001 conference features 15 internationally recognized speakers," says Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture.

The excellent program of speakers includes: Dr. Frank Andrews, professor and section chief of large animal medicine at the University of Tennessee, who has worked in the area of gastric ulcers for 11 years; Joe Hayes, AQHA and NRHA judge and one of the top 10 reiners in the world; Sandy Loree, the farrier who developed the 5S Equine Sole Support System for management of many foot problems; Dr. Sue McDonnell, head of the equine behaviour lab at the University of Pennsylvania where her primary interest is the study and treatment of abnormal stallion behaviour; Mimi Porter, certified and licensed athletic trainer is responsible for developing the first college curriculum on equine therapy in Kentucky; and, Dr. Don Thompson, professor of animal science at Louisiana State University focusing on nutritional and metabolic interactions with reproductive traits in horses.

Topics included in the agenda are:

- Gastric Ulcers, Causes, Significance, Prevention and Control
- Are your Broodmares Getting Enough to Eat?
- Is your Horse Fit?
- Reining an Olympic Discipline - Impact on the Horse Industry
- Breakthrough Techniques to Save the Foundered Horse
- Behaviour Modification to Create the User Friendly Horse
- Factors Affecting Reproductive Success Rates in Horses
- Effect of Growth Hormones on Young, Growing Horses
- Preventing Horse and Tack Theft

The conference is arranged so that attendees can follow four streams of interest – Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. While many follow the program designed for a particular breed preference, conference participants can attend any of the sessions, and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

The program starts with a wine and cheese reception on Friday, January 12 at 7:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday's sessions begin at 8:40 a.m.

Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information about the 2001 conference, contact the Horse Industry Branch in Airdrie at (403)948-8538 or in Edmonton at (780) 415-6107. Government numbers are toll-free by dialing 310-0000 first.

Through the sponsor contribution, the cost of registration are kept to a minimum. Sponsors of the 2001 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference include: Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture; Alberta Equestrian Federation; Alberta Equine On-Line; Alberta Veterinary Medical Association; Appaloosa Horse Club of Canada; Ayerst Veterinary Laboratories; Cargill Animal Nutrition; Champion Feed Services Ltd.; Equi-Master Inc.; Feedrite; Horse Publications Group; Horse Sense Herbs Ltd.; Horses All; Intervet Canada Ltd.; Jones Boys Saddlery & Western Wear; Light Force Canada; Masterfeeds; Merial Canada; Minitube Canada; Northern Horse Review; Olds College; Overseas Horse Transport; Pacific/Prairie Horse; Sciencepure Nutraceuticals; Trail Riding Alberta Conference; United Farmers of Alberta (UFA); Vetoquinol N.A. Inc.; Western Canada Heritage Centre; Wild Rose Equine Ranching Association; and the Alberta S.P.C.A. This sponsorship is sincerely appreciated.

Contact: Les Burwash
(403)948-8538

Horse pasture and manure management challenges

Land and environmental management can be challenging where a number of horses are concentrated on a small parcel of land. And when several of these small land holdings sit close together and near urban areas, the need for good pasture management – including management of manure, soil and water resources – becomes even more critical.

A set of factsheets and a workshop series are being developed to help horse owners address these challenges.

A couple of years ago, Tim Dietzler, agricultural fieldman for the Municipal District of Rocky View, initiated a series of workshops, with support from the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) program, to address management and grazing strategies for small farms and ranches and information for horse owners. The success of those workshops convinced Dietzler of the need for broader based extension materials outlining management strategies for horse operations.

"We took up the challenge from Dietzler, and began developing a beneficial management practices program, including factsheets and workshops, to get the information out to horse owners," explains Christine Sweet, conservation technologist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Lacombe. "We are targeting small land holders, boarding stable managers and others in the horse industry."

The Alberta Agriculture project committee includes Sweet, forage specialist Gordon Hutton, horse industry specialists Dr. Lori Warren and Les Burwash, and conservation technologist Wally Sawchuk, along with Tim Dietzler as an adviser. AESA is providing funding for the project.

"We're developing four pasture management factsheets, each one focusing on different soil zones," says Sweet. "The factsheets will include management strategies for manure, riparian areas and other resources."

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A specific manure management factsheet is also under development. It will focus primarily on the stable areas, as well as pasture management issues. One additional factsheet on soil and water management considerations will be developed.

"The pasture management factsheets are scheduled for completion in spring 2001," says Sweet. "The rest of the series will be completed by next summer."

Dr. Lori Warren will be updating the horse nutrition manual, as well as revamping the Alberta Agriculture Horse Industry webpages. More detailed information will be included on the internet along with the factsheets. The factsheets will be cross-referenced with the nutrition manual.

"Another part of the project will be a series of workshops focusing on management priorities, planned for the M.D. of Rocky View and other interested municipalities, says Sweet. "The project is just getting underway, so we expect the programs to expand as materials are developed and specific workshops are identified and implemented."

Contact: *Christine Sweet*
(403) 782-3301

Alberta Feedlot Management Guide

The second edition of the ***Alberta Feedlot Management Guide*** provides 33 new factsheets and 44 updates to existing factsheets. One hundred and twenty eight factsheets were written and reviewed by leading industry, university and government specialists from across western Canada.

"Information in the Guide will enhance production efficiency and management skills for backgrounders and finishers trying to maintain a competitive edge in today's complex cattle feeding industry across western Canada," says Dale Engstrom. "Today cattle feeders are faced with many questions/issues in today's competitive market."

A survey of the first edition purchasers was conducted in 1998 and they indicated that the guide included information and several ideas that saved them money and increased profits. One user of the first edition reported that he increased his profit by over $5 per head by using ideas from the Guide. Other survey respondents said they found the Guide to be a good reference, a useful tool, learned valuable information on water consumption, feeding practices, marketing ideas, and staff management."

"The Guide contains practical, easy to use information in seven sections: Nutrition & Management; Health Management; Feedlot Facilities & Environment, Economics & Marketing, Quality Assurance, Animal Welfare and People Management," says Tennis Marx, feedlot specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Camrose. "It also contains a table of contents, list of authors and a detailed subject index. The ***Alberta Feedlot Management Guide 2nd Edition*** is a joint project of the Feeder Associations of Alberta Ltd. and Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development. Development of the Guide was partially funded by the Canada-Alberta Farm Business Management Initiative and Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Program (AESA) through the Nutrient Management Initiative."

The second edition of the Guide is available in several formats. Producers who want to purchase the Guide in the CD ROM format will find over 128 facstsheets in full colour with over 100 diagrams and pictures. Users will have searchable access to all the factsheets that are hyper-linked through important key words, and information can be found using the table of contents or the index. The CD ROM format also allows the user to access internet sites that are listed in the Guide if Internet service is available.

Adobe Acrobat Reader is incorporated onto the CD and is used to download or view the factsheets. Several useful calculators are available on the CD ROM that can help producers calculate such things as feeder cattle break-evens, cattle marketing alternatives, yardage costs, pricing silage, bunker silo size or expected silage requirements, and the value of alternative feeds.

The CD ROM version of the Guide retails for $49.00. There is an automated print routine on the CD that allows owners to print individual factsheets, a specific section of the Guide, or the total Guide on their home printer. A binder plus section dividers that provide a convenient and attractive storage place for factsheet copies can be purchased for $19.

The binder version of the Guide contains 128 factsheets that include full colour pictures. The binder contains over 989 pages of information. A complete set of factsheets including the binder and section dividers is available for $139. Future editions of the Guide will only be available in electronic format.

Order forms for the Alberta Feedlot Management Guide are available from all Alberta Agriculture district offices or available on the Alberta Agriculture internet site at <**http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/livestock/beef/feedlot.guide.html**>. Sales are being conducted through the Feeder Associations of Alberta Ltd. The order form can be mailed or faxed in to the office at: Feeder Associations of Alberta Ltd., Box 4190, Barrhead, AB T7N 1A2. For further information, contact the FAA at (780) 674-5381.

Contact:	*Dale Engstrom*	*Tennis Marx*
	(780) 427-4516	*(780) 679-1352*

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Agrivalue Award sponsored by AVAC

AVAC Ltd. Is sponsoring the first Agrivalue New Venture Award as part of the Alberta Business Awards of Distinction. The award will be presented to an Alberta business that has achieved commercial success adding value in the agricultural sector. The award will be presented for the first time along with 12 other awards, including the Premier's Award of Distinction, at the Alberta Chambers of Commerce Awards Gala at the Shaw Centre in Edmonton on February 27, 2001. Submissions are requested for Alberta entrepreneurs or new venture developers eligible for the award. Potential award recipients must demonstrate: a product unavailable in the marketplace, or not produced in Alberta prior to 1997; products or services derived from an agricultural commodity produced in Alberta, or alternatively, a product, service or technology that adds value to Alberta agricultural product(s); and, innovative products and services in agrivalue enjoying significant commercial success now and into the future. Entries must be received by November 20, 2000. Further information and details are available on-line at <**www.abchamber.ab.ca/Alberta/home.htm**>. Submission should be sent to
2001 Alberta Business Awards of Distinction,
c/o Alberta Chambers of Commerce, #2105 TD Tower,
10088 - 102 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T5J 2Z1.

Awards for Alberta pasta manufacturer

At the Canadian Health Foods Association Expo East on October 27 to 29, 2000, Prairie Harvest Canada Limited won two of coveted *Alive Magazine Excellence Awards* for Outstanding Products of the Year 2000. Prairie Harvest Organic brand Durum Semolina Pasta won the bronze medal in the Best Certified Organic Whole Food Product and Prairie Harvest and Artesian Acres Organic Kamut Pasta was awarded the gold medal in the same category. Prairie Harvest Canada Limited, maintains their head office in Edmonton and employs 22 workers in their plant. The company first started producing conventional pasta in Alberta in 1965 under the name of Facchin Foods and changed it's name to Prairie Harvest in the mid-1990s. The company received their organic certification in 1997 and expanded their product line to include organic pasta. The company, that prides itself on bringing the finest conventional and certified organic products to Canadian consumers, is now working on launching a new line of certified organic four-coloured gourmet vegetable pastas. The new products, targeted for distribution to grocery and health food stores by mid-December, will be certified by Quality Assurance International (QAI) and will be Kosher, as are all products bearing the Prairie Harvest Organic or Artesian Acres Organic Kamut brand names. For further information, contact Laurence Godfrey at (780) 907-1091.

Agri-News

November 27, 2000

Alberta organic business development team formed

"It is important for Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to work with industry to facilitate relevant options for producers and processors. Organics presents one such option," says Jackson Gardner, senior manager, bilateral relations and strategic initiatives with Alberta Agriculture, Edmonton. "To effectively coordinate efforts to assist the organic industry within Alberta, a structure to facilitate communications and activities was deemed essential."

The structure being worked on is the ***Organic Business Development Team***, a cross sectoral group of Alberta Agriculture and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff. The group, under the Chairmanship of Mike Dolinski, provincial organic specialist, held a team organizational meeting in October. The first formal meeting of the team was held on November 20, 2000.

Since the organic industry has developed a provincial organization and become more self- sufficient, it is now the team's objective to enhance coordination of Alberta Agriculture and other agency activities and services related to the business of organic agriculture.

"The strategy of forming a business team involving marketing, processing, extension, production, and business expertise across various levels of government, will bring to bare the resources necessary to support the development of this small but growing alternative agricultural business," says Dolinski. "This team, in partnership with the Alberta Organic Association and other components of the organic agriculture community, will focus specifically on further growth of organic agriculture in the province."

The team will be adding members from other government agencies, as well as the industry, as it develops an action based workplan over the next few months. Clearly, the team cannot include everyone with an interest in organic agriculture, but all input on issues related to organic agriculture are more than welcome. If you have ideas on priorities or issues that the team should address in the near and long term, please contact Dolinski at (780) 422-4873.

Contact: *Mike Dolinski*
(780) 422-4873

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Internet site: www.agric.gov.ab.ca/agrinews Editor e-mail: agrinews@agric.gov.ab.ca

Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Growing Global – organic and new crop opportunities

There are new and exciting developments in several areas of diversification in western Canada and on a global scale. The ***Growing Global*** conference being held in Edmonton on March 5 to 7, 2001, provides an opportunity to hear about what is going on at all levels in the areas of organic production and processing. The conference will also feature information on opportunities for medicinal and other unique crops.

"Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's special crops product team has partnered with the Alberta New Crops Network and Go Organic! to present a unique agenda filled with provincial, national and international speakers providing participants with useful advice and scientific information," says Connie Phillips, food scientist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Leduc. "As well, the conference will give a good overview of where these industries are moving as we enter the next century."

The *Growing Global* conference is a new collaboration with the Go Organic! The Go Organic! group held their own successful Edmonton conference in March 2000. After a great deal of consultation within the various organizing committees it was decided that the greatest value to both the organic and herbal/aromatic crops industries was to combine the Go Organic! and Western Canadian Medicinal Plants Conference into a fresh, new partnership for 2001.

Some of the topics at the 2001 conference include:

- organic certification standards for Canada, U.S.A. and European Union
- the global overview on what's happening in medicinals and aromatics
- healing animals through medicinal herbs
- medicinal herbs and new federal government initiatives
- homeopathic animal treatments
- industry development issues for medicinals, aromatics and organics
- Canadian special crops with medicinal properties
- essential oils
- organic livestock potential
- global opportunities in organic products
- resources for businesses interested in processing and value-adding

The conference also hosts a trade show and poster session that runs from March 6 to 7. Anyone interested in having a booth at the trade show can contact Alan Dooley at (780) 422-2559.

Conference registration fee is $200.00/person before February 9, 2001. After that date, conference registration is $250.00/person. Student registration is $50.00. Single day registration is also available for $150.00/person. If you would like to be on a mailing list to receive an agenda/registration form, please contact the Crop Diversification Centre North at (780) 422-1789.

The conference is being held at the Ramada Hotel and Conference Centre, 1-877-291-4911 (toll free) or (780) 454-5454, in Edmonton. A limited number of rooms have made available at a special conference rate. Specify *Growing Global Conference* when registering.

Contact: Connie Phillips
(780) 980-4865

Call for Farm Direct Marketers

Most food gets from the farm gate to the consumer through a highly efficient system that takes advantage of economies of scale and specialization to keep processing and distribution costs low. This system suits most farmers who are content to devote their limited time to what they know best - planting, growing and harvesting food – while leaving the processing and marketing to agri-business. However, selling directly to urban consumers is an option that is growing in popularity among farm producers. Any time producers sell products or services directly to the consumer they are engaged in farm direct marketing (FDM).

"Several factors account for the renewed interest in FDM," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist – business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Westlock. "One is dissatisfaction with low farm-gate prices. The farm price is often only a fraction of the retail food price. Prices received for produce sold directly to consumers can be substantially higher than typical wholesale prices. Increased interest in food safety, the environment and alternative agriculture also support the growth of farm direct sales."

Consumers in large urban centres are starting to demand farm fresh, diverse and flavourful produce. This growing demand for fresh, nutritious, health oriented products and, according to a recently released USDA study entitled *Direct Marketing Today*, concerns over social heritage, including the institution of the family farm, are driving FDM. FDM allows consumers a kind of vicarious participation in the rich social heritage of the family farm.

"Both the US study and the direct marketing focus groups held in Alberta last fall reveal similar challenges for farm direct marketers across the continent: returns, regulations, finances, insurance, labour, networks," adds Engel.

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development specialists from across the province have joined together with the Alberta Farmers' Market Association to bring Alberta farm direct marketers a conference that addresses farm direct marketers' needs. ***Explore Direct*** is being held at the Nisku Inn on

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February 26 and 27, 2001. It will bring together FDM gurus from across the continent to help Albertans strengthen their marketing skills, explore winning alternatives and expand their networks.

Speakers include: Monika Roth, Cornell Cooperative Extension; Judy Shultz, Edmonton Journal; and, Nancy Kindler, Full Course Strategies.

For more information on the conference, contact Betty Vladicka at (780) 422-1789. For toll free access, dial 310-0000 and follow the prompts. Registration brochures are now available at all Alberta Agriculture district offices.

*Contact **Explore Direct** Conference Promotions Committee:*

Kerry Engel
(780) 349-4465
kerry.engel@gov.ab.ca

Linda Hawk
Medicine Hat, AB
(403) 529-3616
linda.hawk@gov.ab.ca

Karen Goad
Grande Prairie, AB
(780) 538-5285
karen.goad@gov.ab.ca

Start checking canola

Just because the crop is in the bin doesn't mean that the job is over. In order to protect the harvested crop, producers need to continue to check the bins on a regular basis for heating of canola.

"There are a number of reasons why canola that was dry when harvested could be heating from excess moisture once it's in storage," says Jay Byer, cereals and oilseed specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Bonnyville.

Temperature-humidity curve – the hotter anything is, the more moisture it can hold and the less moisture is expressed in a non-destructive moisture test. So, at 25 to 30 degrees C, dry canola can hold enough moisture to start the spoiling process when the bin is cooled to five to 10 degrees. This has surprised many producers in the past when dry canola was put up in hot temperatures.

Insect activity – no time to clean out the bin before dumping canola into it? If there were a few little piles of grain left in the bin over the summer, or the bin was not properly cleaned, this can lead to an infestation of rusty grain beetle, for example. Having those bugs living and breathing in the grain crop can not only damage the canola, their respiration can increase the moisture in the bin to dangerous levels.

Borderline dryness – especially at risk is canola that was taken off quickly at high moisture because it was getting late in the season. Moisture is already in an available form and can lead to spoilage quite quickly.

Weedy fields – weedy crops can lead to lots of weed seeds in the bin. Often these seeds are higher in moisture than the harvested canola.

"Once the crop is in the bin, nothing can be done about its composition except aeration or an expensive grain drying operation," says Byer. "What a producer can do, however, is monitor the bins and ensure that a problem is not developing. One easy way to monitor harvested crops is to leave a metal rod stuck in the lower part of the bin. Most metals are good conductors of heat. Feeling to see if the rod is warmer than the environment on a regular basis will signal if there is a problem. If a problem develops, taking a load out of the bottom of the bin and dumping it back on top will generally break up the area of the crop that is heating."

If insects are a problem, it may be necessary to keep moving loads of the stored canola or other grains until a real cold snap happens. Moving grain during this cold snap will kill most of the bugs.

Protecting the investment in the bin is important at this time of lower prices. Remember to keep checking stored canola.

Contact: *Jay Byer*
(780) 826-3388

Is GPS cost effective?

In 1997, the County of Camrose began a project to demonstrate the practicality of using precision farming systems on a field scale basis with the use of global positioning systems (GPS) in day-to-day farm operations.

"The project was established to look at whether or not precision farming and GPS were practical and to determine if the benefits, lower input costs and reduced environmental impacts, outweigh the costs," explains Charlotte Mathieu, assistant agricultural fieldman, Camrose.

The project is on a quarter section in the central part of the County, and is farmed by the cooperator using his regular farming equipment. The seeding equipment includes a 40-foot Flexi-Coil 6000 with Barton openers and coupled to a 50 series grain tank. The combines are John Deere 9600 equipped with straight cut headers.

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"Four transects were selected in the field representing overall field topography. Three landscape positions in each transect were positioned using GSP - upper, mid and lower slope," says Annette Svederus, resource management research technician with conservation and development, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Soil and crop sampling, including soil classification, soil structure, soil texture, fertility, moisture and crop yield, is done at each of the measurement points. These same measurement points are relocated each year, so we have a baseline to use and measure annual soil and crop samples against."

For the project, the cooperator's in-kind contribution was the GPS system, including computer hardware and software for the tractor, seeding equipment, yield monitor and other components, as well as the office computer and software. In GPS, satellites transmit signals picked up by receivers to define the receiver's location. With this georeferenced information and on-board sensors, farm equipment can monitor crop yields and precisely guide applications of crop inputs, such as fertilizers and herbicides. Other applications included crop scouting for weeds, scouting for management areas, and rock tagging for pick-up.

"Our intent was to look at the whole system, from identifying specific areas in the field that have fertilizer nutrient requirements and potential weed problems, to soil structure and drainage concerns," says Mathieu. "This information is then linked with yield monitor data from the combine to ensure the yield response justifies the practice; for example changing fertilizer applications for yield benefits."

This year the project focused on comparing yield responses and field economics with contribution margins. In 2001, the focus will be on variable rate herbicides.

"We applied the recommended fertilizer rate in a 40-foot wide strip along the entire length of the field, and then followed with a half rate and one and a half rate application on identical adjacent strips," adds Mathieu. "This was done to compare the crop's response to fertilizer between the low, mid and upper slope locations in the field. Initial results indicate that increasing the fertilizer at mid and upper slopes can improve yields, and reducing the fertilizer at lower slope positions can prevent overfertilization."

Results from upper slope positions also show that poor soil quality may be more important in reducing crop yields than lack of moisture, which is often assumed to be the limiting factor.

"Upper slopes have more erosion, the topsoil and nutrients are often eroded into the lower slope positions," says Svederus. "The soil moisture may be available at the upper slopes, but the plants don't have the soil and nutrients for proper growth, therefore unable to take advantage of the water. Precision farming systems can help farmers avoid overfertilizing in the low, nutrient rich areas, and underfertilizing in the upper areas. Proper fertilization is a practice that has money saving potential."

The project is proving precision farming can benefit growers by providing the highest efficiency of yield to input to get the best use of fertilizer and herbicides, and environmental benefits by ensuring fertilizer is only applied at rates and in locations where it will be used. The end results are reduced input costs to producers and reduced risk to the environment from excess inputs.

"The more producers know about their operation, the better off they are financially and input wise," says Svederus.

Results to date show that using a precision farming system can provide valuable information because it allows the farmer to see relationships between different pieces of data, from annual yield maps, to soil maps.

"Precision farming and GPS give the cooperator useful information as opposed to nice-to-know information," says Mathieu. "Information collected with the proper equipment is useful and beneficial both from the economic standpoint and from the environmental and sustainable front. For example, the project is quickly pointing out that yield monitors provide useful information only if the yield data can be related to soil types, fertility and other factors."

This project will continue for one more year. It is a joint project between the County of Camrose, Ross Agri Supplies, Thirsk Seed Farms and the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture (AESA) Program. Alberta Agriculture's conservation and development branch provided technical expertise and field support to the project.

Contact: *Annette Svederus* *(780) 427-3718*
Charlotte Mathieu *(780) 672-4765*

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Pursuing Profits 2001

This annual seminar focuses on information that beef producers can use in enhancing their profit of the beef herd. The seminar is being held on January 23, 2001 at the Burnt Lake Auction in Red Deer and at the Community Centre in Hanna on January 24, 2001. The agenda focuses on production issues and financial strategies to increase the profit of a cow herd. Harlan Hughes, retired NDSU extension livestock economist, will present two sessions, Economics of Replacement Heifers and Making the Cattle Cycle Work for You. Other topics include Wintering Site for the Cow Herd and Keys to Identify Your Herd's Profitability. For further information, contact Jeff Millang, beef specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Olds (403) 556-4220. For registration, call the Coronation Alberta Agriculture office at 1-800-387-6030.

Product Costing

This seminar is developed specifically for the beginning or emerging agri-food processor, especially for those working on new product development projects or companies wishing to use the services of the Food Processing Development Centre in Leduc. The seminar is scheduled for January 31, 2001. Registration deadline is January 26, 2001 and registration cost is $37.45. For further information, contact Joyce Lencucha, agri-food development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Red Deer (403) 340-5358.

Gopher damage control

A new factsheet has been produced, ***Control of Richardson's Ground Squirrel (Gopher) Damage*** (Agri-Facts, Agdex 684-2). This common rodent is found on all man-altered landscapes, from cultivated farmland to highly-maintained golf courses. The factsheet contains information on the life history of this common rodent, its reproductive cycles, life span, hibernation, social behaviour, diet and weight. It also contains a considerable amount of information on damage and control. Copies of this free factsheet are available at all Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development offices and from the Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6.

Where can you find that?

Alberta's Farmers' Advocate office, has recently updated the ***Obsolete or Hard to Locate Repair/Replacement Parts Source*** publication. The information contained in the publication was compiled by the Alberta Farm Implement Act Administration. Copies can be obtained free of charge through the Farmers' Advocate Office at:

Farm Implement Act Administration
#305, 7000 - 113 Street
Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6

The information contained in the publication is also available on the Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development website. The web address is <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/engineer/obsolete/index.html**>. For further information, contact Nanci Howard or Carol Makowecki at (780) 427-2433.

Alternative Livestock Diversification Conference coming to Three Hills

Assess the challenges, realize the risks and investigate the opportunities in bison, elk and whitetail/mule deer industries. At the ***Alternative Livestock Diversification Conference*** being held at the Three Hills Community Memorial Centre on November 30, 2000, leading government and industry representatives will address:

- production highlights
- marketing opportunities
- challenges facing the industry
- business planning strategies
- financing criteria for alternative livestock enterprises

Attendees will be able to make new contacts, view industry displays, meet the people who are working with the diversified livestock industries in this province and learn how to assess the feasibility of a new enterprise. Registration fee is $25.00 (includes GST, lunch and workshop materials). To register/or for a conference brochure call: Dorothy Stewart, customer service representative in Three Hills at (403) 443-8525 (dial 310-000 first for toll-free dialing) or e-mail <**dorothy.stewart@gov.ab.ca**>. Advance registration is preferred, however, registration at the door will also be accepted.

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Western Canadian Grazing conference

The ***Western Canadian Grazing Conference*** is planned for December 6 to 8, 2000 at the Capri Centre, Red Deer. Agenda items include presentations on: Grazing for the 21st Century; Fade to Black (stay out of the red); Grazeconomics; The Future Landscape; Reaping the Below Ground Advantage; Grazing to the Extreme; Using Fertilizer and Manure to Maintain Productive Pastures; and, Vision of Grassland Farming for the 21st Century. Attendees will also be able to visit the Agribusines booths that will be set-up for the event. For further information, contact Richard DeBruijn, Alberta Forage Council, (403) 782-0772.

Candle light event

The Devonian Botanic Garden (DBG), Edmonton, is holding a candle light event on December 3, 2000 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. This will be a unique opportunity to enjoy winter in the DBG and to appreciate the beauty, simplicity and peacefulness of the Kurimoto Japanese Garden on a winter's night. The Luminaria will consist of an outdoor display of 2,000 lit candles placed along the pathways inside paper bags, supported by sand. When lit at night, the candles glow and radiate a beautiful touch of light. After a walk through the garden, sip hot apple cider and listen to story telling around the fire pits. A hayride is also planned. Admission is $7 for adults and $5 for children under 12. For further information, contact Dianne Allen at (780) 987-3054.

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Equine therapy a hot topic at the Horse Breeders and Owners Conference

In recent years, the use of physical agents on horses has increased and their value in equine health care has been recognized. However, equine therapy is still an undervalued area of equine health care. While physical agents, such as heat, cold, water, sound, electrical currents, light, magnetic fields, exercise and manual pressure, are considered part of standard care in humans, they are not widely used in equine therapy.

"Equine therapy tools and techniques are a valuable aid to rehabilitation, making it more comfortable, enabling the horse to be more functional throughout recovery and shortening the duration of recovery," says Mimi Porter, Equine Therapy, Inc., Lexington, Kentucky. "Techniques used by an equine therapist can reduce tissue inflammation, relieve pain, reduce tissue congestion, alter circulatory flow, increase collagen extensibility, maintain muscle tone and increase the horse's sense of well-being throughout the recovery time."

Veterinary interest in the tools and techniques used by equine therapists is growing. An Equine Therapy curriculum, a professional degree program, has been developed and is the topic of Mimi Porter's presentation at this year's Horse Breeders and Owners Conference (HBOC).

"The conference is being held on January 12 to 14, 2001 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer," says Les Burwash, head of equine studies with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "Porter is one of 15 professionals and specialists in equine studies and disciplines that we have coming to Alberta to present at the 2001 conference."

The conference is arranged so that attendees can follow four streams of interest – Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. While many follow the program designed for a particular breed preference, conference participants can attend any of the sessions, and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

The program starts with a wine and cheese reception on Friday, January 12 at 7:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday's sessions begin at 8:40 a.m.

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This Week

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information about the 2001 conference, contact the Horse Industry Branch in Airdrie at (403)948-8538 or in Edmonton at (780) 415-6107. Government numbers are toll-free by dialling 310-0000 first.

Contact: Les Burwash
(403)948-8538

Choosing next year's variety

It's time for farmers to start thinking about variety selections for next year. There is, as always, a lot of information on available varieties, but farmers are often leery about the source. Developing skill in evaluating information is always valuable.

"It's important to remember that no source of varietal information is perfect," says Ron Hockridge, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Wetaskiwin. "The Alberta Agriculture publication on varieties of cereals and oilseeds is good information, but even the people who produce the data are quick to point out its limitations.

"For the Alberta Agriculture publication, tests are set up to receive an equal comparison, that means that all varieties are treated the same in each test site. Even the testing in different sites is standardized as much as possible. While this sounds fair, it also means that varieties with special strengths may not get to demonstrate them, for example herbicide tolerance may be an advantage but that feature may not be seen if all weeds are controlled by another method."

Small plots tend to yield higher than full field plantings but the difference between varieties should be similar. Replication takes out some of the error and gives an estimate of how much of the difference can actually be attributed to variety. The variety publication can be confidently used, but farmers should remember that the data has an error factor of 5 per cent for cereals and 8 per cent for canola.

"Strip trials are closer to the farm situation," adds Hockridge. "They are large enough to go across variations in the soil and their long, narrow form is an attempt to get all varieties tested across the same variations. Their larger size increases the risk of having different conditions for each variety though. Replication reduces that risk and gives an estimate of how much differences in yield can be attributed to other factors."

Another approach to comparing varieties is the Alberta Management Insights program. Farmers are asked to submit information on their varieties, tillage practices, fertility program and a few other agronomic practices when they send in their crop insurance yield information. In return, they can get a report to show how their production compares to their area average and provincial average. The data bank is used to produce a leaflet with information on varieties. This gives actual farm data, but information is only gathered after varieties are registered and in farmers' hands. Numbers cannot be generated for varieties where the average includes less than five farms, so many of the new varieties are not listed.

"All approaches to generating data on varieties are valuable," says Hockridge. "Farmers have to know their limitations and make judgements from all the information at their disposal. Then they have to put it in perspective. Choosing the right variety can increase yield by 20 per cent, so the decision is an important one. Using the right fertility program can also make a difference of up to 200 per cent."

Contact: Ron Hockridge
(780) 361-1240

Taking a product from gate to plate

Farm direct marketing is not a new concept by any means; however, it is becoming increasingly popular as a method of selling fresh farm products directly to the consumer. Producers are looking for ways to increase their share of the retail dollar, and consumers are looking for wholesome, flavourful products at their source.

"There are a number of consumer trends which put direct marketers in a favourable position," says Linda Hawk, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Medicine Hat. "Increased concern among consumers about the quality of food they eat means they're willing to search out and pay extra for foods they believe will be fresh and nutritious. Farm direct marketers can offer just-picked product at the source."

In addition to being health-conscious, many consumers are searching for opportunities to rediscover their roots. Most have descendants who were in the agriculture sector, and visiting a farm is a way to recapture their history. The increasingly urban society often associates rural life with a less stressful and more balanced way of living. Urbanites are drawn to the country not only for the products, but also for the atmosphere.

Before making the decision to "go direct", it is important to "explore direct". Do you have the personal qualifications? Does farm direct marketing fit your business? Is your target audience accessible through farm direct marketing?

Explore the potential for farm direct marketing in your business by attending ***Explore Direct***, a conference that explores marketing rural Alberta agrifood products direct to consumers. Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Farmers' Market Association are co-hosting this conference at the Nisku

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Inn on February 26 to 27, 2001. Topics will focus on three streams: marketing techniques and tools, management issues and methods of farmdirect marketing.

For more information on the conference, contact Betty Vladicka at (780) 422-1789. For toll free access, dial 310-0000 and follow the prompts. Registration brochures are available at Alberta Agriculture District offices.

Contact: Linda Hawk (403) 529-3616
linda.hawk@gov.ab.ca
Karen Goad (780) 538-5285
karen.goad@gov.ab.ca
Kerry Engel (780) 349-4465
kerry.engel@gov.ab.ca

Forage rotation

The dry summer, the increase in low residue producing special crops, the increase in fuel and fertilizer prices – all are factors in the decisions surrounding the value of forage in a crop rotation.

"Forages can increase soil organic matter," says Gordon Frank, crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Brooks. "Their roots are resistant to decay. The years in forage allow land to be untilled for the life of the stand. This reduces oxidation of organic matter. Organic matter protects soil from erosion, improves water and nutrient holding capacity and reduces compaction."

Forages like alfalfa tap into deep soil water and nutrients. Lowering a water table can reduce soil salinity and leached nutrients can be brought to the surface by deep roots. Forage roots leave open channels for water movement. Soil microorganisms often flourish under these conditions.

"Forages also reduce weeds," adds Frank. "The frequent cutting controls most perennial weeds. Reduced tillage encourages beetles and other small creatures to eat weed seeds at or near the surface. However, perennial broad-leaf forages can cause an increase in weeds, such as dandelions. Shortening the stand life to three years and rotating to a grass/cereal species will minimize the time dandelions have to become established."

Rotating nitrogen producing legumes more frequently provides the best future benefit from fixed nitrogen and the burst of yield from rotation itself. Although forages have been shown to improve soil and yield for up to nine years, the biggest benefit is in the first few years after the forage.

"Rotating legume based hay fields and legume based pastures with grain crops improves nutrient cycling and improves the soil," says Frank. "Any increased costs associated with such a rotation schedule are far outweighed by the benefits."

Contact: Gordon Frank
(403) 362-1212

Approved cattle tagging sites

The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) is accepting applications from locations seeking to operate as approved tagging sites under the Canadian Cattle Identification Program

"Many herd owners don't have suitable facilities to restrain cattle for tagging" says Cindy McCreath, communications manager with the CCIA. "Provisions are being made to establish approved tagging sites as a result of this industry concern. Approved tagging sites are permitted to set their own fees for supplying this service."

Any suitable facility may apply to become an approved tagging site. The operator must provide CCIA with the name and address of the site and agree not to mix untagged cattle belonging to one owner with untagged cattle belonging to anyone else. The operator of the tagging site must also ensure that animals are tagged only with tags issued to the owner of those animals, and keep records of the names and addresses of the owners of the animals brought to the site, the date of tagging and the tag numbers applied to the animal. Tagging facilities may also choose to sell tags and must then meet the requirements of a tag distributor.

"The Board of Directors of the CCIA undertook to keep the Canadian Cattle Identification Program as industry-friendly as possible," says CCIA general manager, Julie Stitt. "The provision for approved tagging sites is one example of our efforts to make the program workable for producers."

The program begins January 1, 2001. All cattle are to be tagged with a CCIA-approved ear tag by the time they leave the herd of origin. Packing plants will begin reading ID numbers and maintaining the identification to the point of carcass inspection on July 1, 2001. The program improves the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA's) ability to trace serious livestock disease and food safety concerns, thus helping protect the market for Canadian beef. Full enforcement of the program by CFIA begins July 1, 2002.

"Fourteen types of tags are currently approved for use in the program and most are widely available from locations that normally sell ear tags and other farm supplies," adds McCreath. "Producers having difficulty finding tags in a particular location are advised to ask their farm supply dealer to stock the product."

To receive an approved tagging site application, or for more information about the Canadian Cattle Identification Program, call 1-877-909-BEEF (2333).

Contact: Julie Stitt
(403) 275-2083
Cindy McCreath
(403) 275-8558
<mccreathc@cattle.ca>

Farm and ranch diversification

The face of agriculture has been changing considerably over the last few years. Look around the rural landscape and it's easy to see many examples of farm revenue diversification enterprises.

"Agri-tourism and farm direct marketing are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the variety of enterprises encompassing the new agricultural economy," says Janice McGregor, rural development specialist - business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Morinville. "What was once viewed as hobby farming has taken on new meaning as farmers seek to add value to their farm products and services."

Today, agricultural producers are:

- exploring non-traditional farm animals and crops;
- providing educational consulting and training;
- testing new marketing and distribution channels such as e-commerce;
- adding value to existing products through processing and packaging;
- promoting farm and ranch recreation;
- revitalizing historic buildings, machinery and equipment; and,
- establishing contract services, leases and time shares.

The word agripreneur describes a producer who organizes, operates and assumes the risk for diversification of an established or new business associated with food, agriculture or a natural resource. Agripreneurs carefully assess their land, buildings, equipment and skills before determining niche market diversification opportunities. By capitalizing on the skills and interests of farm family members and through creative packaging and marketing, they open up many non-traditional channels to sell agricultural products and services.

"There has been much discussion about what a *successful* diversified farm operation looks like," adds McGregor. "It's difficult to collect benchmark data on new farm diversification options as producers are often unwilling to share costs of production, marketing tips and contacts, organizational structure or sources of information. Much of the information available is anecdotal, and we don't know if an idea that works in one area or on one particular farm will work as effectively anywhere else given the different natural resources, people and skills involved."

Diversification examples abound on the Internet. Some intriguing ideas include:

- theme dinners at a B&B
- culinary classes using artisan food products grown on the farm
- wine fellowships
- cheese subscriptions
- mail order Christmas trees
- on-line herb catalogs
- on-farm concerts at an outdoor amphitheatre
- working ranch holidays, gold panning, customized bus tours
- quail leases
- 'Rent Mother Nature' – rent a maple tree, lobster pot, beehive
- 'Rent the Ranch' – by the day, week or month
- farm apprenticeships
- stewardship workshops

"It is clear from these examples that the farm operators involved have identified their target customer, developed valuable networks and assessed the risks and opportunities of adding value to their current products and services," says McGregor. "They've integrated the new enterprises into their working operation and involved all family members and staff in the provision of good customer service. It all adds up to success whichever way you look at it!"

The October 2000 issue of the ***Northwest Processor*** newsletter spotlights eight farm direct marketers. The newsletter links rural food processors and farm managers with research, technology and food industry information. The *Northwest Processor* newsletter is published four times a year and is free of charge. To read more on successful farm diversification operations in Alberta call 780-349-4465 and ask to be put on the mailing list.

If you are seeking information on farm diversification, plan to attend Explore Direct: Marketing rural Alberta products direct to consumers. This two-day conference, February 26 and 27, 2001, covers a variety of direct marketing and diversification options. Topics include: logo development, risk management (insurance issues), e-commerce, customer service, labour options and farmers' markets. Conference brochures are available from Kerry Engel, rural development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Westlock, at (780) 349-4465.

Contact: Janice McGregor (780) 939-4351

Kerry Engel (780) 349-4465

Agri-News Briefs

Organics included as part of the Food Safety Line

The availability of organic foods is increasing. Consumers can now purchase them at their local retail grocery stores as well as farmer's markets and directly from producers. Organic foods provide more choice for consumers. However, they may mean different things to different consumers and misconceptions often exist about what they offer. For example, organic foods are not more nutritious or safer than conventionally produced foods. The staff of the Food Safety Info Line has produced a factsheet to provide information on:

- what are organic foods?
- how consumers can identify organic foods
- how organic foods are regulated
- safe handling tips

Consumers can obtain free copies of the factsheet and other food safety information by calling the **Food Safety Info Line at 1-800-892-8333.** The Food Safety Info Line is a not-for-profit organization that provides consumers with direct access to current, credible food safety information through a toll-free phone line, science based information resources and public education. Food safety specialists are available for interviews about this and other food safety issues as they arise. For further information, contact Jane Carlyle, coordinator, Food Safety Info Line.

Alberta Agriculture staff win international publication awards

The recent Annual Meeting of the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) and Crop Science Society of America was the scene for the presentation of three awards to Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development staff. This international conference attracted 4,200 agricultural scientists from over 70 countries. The ASA Educational Materials Awards Program presented awards for three separate projects that were developed within Alberta Agriculture. ***Pulse Crops in Alberta*** is a new production manual, written by several members of the Alberta Agriculture Pulse and Special Crops Team (with assistance from several researchers from throughout Western Canada) and edited, designed and published by the Alberta Agriculture Information Packaging Centre. Dr. Mike Ottman (University of Arizona) noted that his committee was very impressed by the content and presentation of the pulse manual. The publication received the award in a very competitive category. ***Diseases of Pests and Ginseng in Alberta*** was a joint effort of Alberta Agriculture (K.F. Chang, Ron Howard and Stan Blade) and the Alberta Research Council (S.F. Hwang) with support from the Special Crops Product Team. In addition, the CD-ROM authored by several Alberta Agriculture staff (Kirsty Piquette, Brad Lowrie, Morley Kjargaard and Stan Blade) entitled ***Herb and Spice Production and Planning Guide*** won an award in the multimedia category. Prof. Dale L. Fjell (Kansas State University) congratulated the three teams on their superb packaging of valuable information for producers and processors. For further information, contact Dr. Stan Blade at Alberta Agriculture's Crop Diversification Centre North (780) 415-2311

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Check your bins or "The Nightmare Before Christmas" begins

T'was the night before Christmas and all through the bin
All kinds of things were stirring making good grain a ruin.

The farmer was tucked up all snug in his bed.
While visions of better prices danced in his head.

When all of a sudden there rose such a clatter,
That he sprang from his bed to see what was the matter.

He drew back the curtain and threw open the sash.
He was concerned that something was eating his stash.

The roof of the bin glistened so bright
From the light of the moon on a clear starry night.

The steam it was rising from the top of the bin.
At once he realized the pickle he was in....

(Adapted from ***Twas The Night Before Christmas*** with sincere apologies to Clement Clarke Moore). This poem could have continued to tell how the grain heats up and quality is lost. Or even how grain gets taken to the elevator only to be rejected because of insects, such as the rusty grain beetle. This is the time of year when the grain in bins may start to heat up. There are already reports of heating occurring. Come January and February, reports of rusty grain beetles will start. Be sure to check bins for any signs of heating. If heating is taking place, remove one or two truck loads of grain and allow the cold winter air to cool it. Or, if there is aeration on the bin, turn on the fan. At this time of year, heating will be occurring at the top of the bin, due to temperature inversions occurring inside the bin. For further information, contact John Huffman, cereal and oilseed specialist, Grande Prairie, (780) 538-5633.

Agri-News

December 11, 2000

New NAWMA president leads alien invasion battle

The North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) elected Tim Dietzler of Calgary, Alberta as their new president at their August meeting in Nebraska, U.S. NAWMA represents a membership of 165 weed managers from across the U.S. and Canada. Alberta has the strongest number of Canadian members, with others from B.C. and Manitoba.

Dietzler, agricultural fieldman with the Municipal District of Rocky View, not only takes on the role of President, but the leadership in the battle against alien weed species invasion. The mandate of NAWMA is to provide education, regulatory direction, professional improvement and environmental awareness to preserve and protect our natural resources from the degrading impacts of exotic, invasive, noxious weeds.

Some of the key invasive species receiving attention include purple loosestrife, knapweed, ox-eye daisy, leafy spurge and yellow star thistle. All of these plants are introduced into an environment where they did not evolve, and without any natural enemies to limit their reproduction and spread. Ultimately if left unchecked, these invasive species will totally alter ecosystems and decimate biodiversity.

"In the U.S., billions of dollars have been lost to invasive species," explains Dietzler. "In Canada, if we get active, we can save millions of dollars and reduce both the ecological and economic impacts."

Programs such as Alberta's Weed Free Hay Certification program are working to reduce the spread of invasive species. Technology such as Global Position Systems (GPS) mapping, in which Alberta is leading the way, will help with monitoring and control.

The U.S. recently instituted a ***National Weed Awareness Week*** held annually in Washington, D.C. Dietzler would like to see something similar developed in Canada. In February, Dietzler and other NAWMA members will travel to Washington D.C. to help educate politicians about the potential problems presented by invasive species.

"It will be good to have Canadian representatives there to show the international community that there is support for these programs," says Dietzler. "It should also help to raise the profile for Canadian programs."

Contact: *Tim Dietzler*
(403) 520-1271
<tdietzler@gov.mdrockyview.ab.ca>

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Alberta
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

2000 Agribition Livestock Judging Team

Alberta 4-H Judges were a force to contend with at the International 4-H Judging Seminar at Agribition in Regina, Saskatchewan on November 18 to 21. UFA -AgPro, Alberta Treasury Branches (ATB), and Alberta 4-H co-sponsor this judging award trip.

Eight Alberta 4-H members and two 4-H leaders travelled to Regina to compete in the competition which involved over 50 contestants from throughout Canada and the neighbouring States. The Alberta team consisting of Rachelle Fisher, Didsbury; Dana MacMillan, Vermilion; Robyn Mader, Carstairs; Mary Rutledge, Wainwright; Melissa Snelgrove, Vermilion; Jill Stevens, Carstairs; Tara Warburton, Fort Macleod; Ashleigh Wray Irricana and chaperones Sandy Warburton, Fort Macleod; April Brower, Warner.

Team Alberta finished in first place overall. In the Individual competitions, overall competitions Grand Aggregate winner was Robyn Mader of Carstairs with Mary Rutledge of Wainwright reaching fourth spot.

In the species competitions Mary Rutledge placed first and Dana MacMillian from Vermillion placed fourth in beef judging. Robyn Mader of Carstairs placed first in Bison, Rachelle Fisher of Didsbury placed first in Sheep, Dairy winner was Melissa Snelgrove of Vermilion with Ashleigh Wray of Irricana placing fifth. In overall oral reasons third went to Rachelle Fisher and fourth to Robyn Mader.

"This is the best Alberta has done in ten years at this competition," says Henry Wiegman, provincial 4-H agriculture specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "We have been fortunate to send a strong team each year but this team excelled."

The 4-H members who travelled to Regina won the right to represent Alberta at the ATB Alberta 4-H Provincial Judging Competition being held in Olds in August, 2001.

Alberta through the support of UFA Ag-Pro, ATB and the Alberta 4-H Program Trust also sends a team of 4 judges to the Northern International Livestock Exposition in Billings Montana in October, a team of eight judges to the Denver Colorado Western Regional 4-H Livestock Evaluation Competition in mid-January and a team of three judges to the Calgary Livestock Evaluation School in early June.

Contact: Henry Wiegman
(780) 427-4532

Reproductive success in broodmares

The goals of most horse breeding operations includes understanding and implementing factors that will increase the efficiency of their broodmares and decrease the cost of getting live foals. Those factors can include both biological factors and management factors that should be considered as producers go into the upcoming breeding season.

"We are very fortunate to have Karen McDowell, MS, PhD, a reproductive biologist with the department of veterinary science with the University of Kentucky as one of the speakers scheduled for the 2001 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference," says Les Burwash, manager of horse programs with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie. "McDowell's presentation will cover reproductive success; early conceptus loss; normal reproductive performance; effects of mare and stallion age; and, effect of mare availability."

McDowell maintains that every manager can take positive steps to increase the per season success rate for their farm. She will explain several management techniques involved in ensuring greater broodmare success.

"The 2001 Horse Breeders and Owners Conference is being held on January 12 to 14, 2001 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer," adds Burwash. "McDowell is one of 15 professionals and specialists in equine studies and disciplines that we have coming to Alberta to present at the 2001 conference."

The conference is arranged so that attendees can follow four streams of interest – Arabian, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and all breeds. While many follow the program designed for a particular breed preference, conference participants can attend any of the sessions, and will receive the printed materials from all sessions.

The program starts with a wine and cheese reception on Friday, January 12 at 7:00 p.m. Sessions begin at 8:40 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Conference registration is $75 per person. For more information about the 2001 conference, contact the Horse Industry Branch in Airdrie at (403) 948-8538 or in Edmonton at (780) 415-6107. Government numbers are toll-free by dialling 310-0000 first.

Contact: Les Burwash
(403)948-8538

Poinsettia

The Poinsettia, a native plant of Mexico, was introduced into the United States in the 1800's by Joel Poinsett, a botanist from South Carolina who was serving as an Ambassador to Mexico. Poinsett was fascinated with the beautiful scarlet flowers of the plant and brought the plant home to South Carolina.

"Poinsettia have come along way from the selections Poinsett made in Mexico," says Shelley Barkley, information officer with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre South, Brooks. "Years of breeding programs have resulted in poinsettia that are pink, cream, peach, white and red or pink variegated varieties. There is even a variety that is cream, rose, and pink, the color of the bracts deepens as the bract ages, so the plant changes color during the Christmas season. Despite the multitude of colors available to consumers, red still is the most popular color of poinsettia."

The colored part of the poinsettia, often thought of as the flower, is actually modified leaves called bracts. The flower is actually the small yellow balls in the centre of the bracts.

"When choosing a poinsettia, select plants will good bract color, be sure the color extends right to the edges of the bracts," says Barkley. "If the edge is green, the plant is not fully mature and will never reach its full potential. Plants with dark green and plentiful foliage down to the soil line are a great choice. The stems of the plant should be stiff with no signs of wilting, drooping or breaking. The proper proportion size and shape to the container is important to the general attractiveness and balance of the plant. Lastly, look at the plant's soil, avoid waterlogged soil especially if the plant is wilted. This can indicate root rot, a root disease that is irreversible.

Moving live plants on cold, winter days can be tricky, but a little planning will make the trip less traumatic to the plant. The plant shop needs to be the last stop before going home, and the vehicle needs to be warm. Paper wrapping is a better insulator than plastic. The worst spot for the plant is on the floor in front of the heater vent as it can cook there. Move the plant from the car to its new home quickly. Unwrap the plant as soon as possible, leaving it in the sleeve too long will cause the plant to begin to deteriorate.

Poinsettias thrive in bright, direct light in the Alberta winter. They require about six hours of light a day. Low light levels will cause the leaves to yellow and drop. The ideal room temperature is about 20 to 22 degrees C, a good gauge is that if you are comfortable with the temperature in your home, your poinsettia will be too. Drafty spots like the window sill or hot spots like sitting on the TV, in front of the heat ducts or fire place can make the whole plant droop. The window sill can be harmful for another reason, closing the curtains at night with the plant trapped between the curtains and the window can chill or even freeze the plant.

"Avoid fertilizing the plant while it is in bloom," adds Barkley. "Water the poinsettia when the soil is dry to the touch, never let it dry completely. Plants that are too dry, have shrivelled leaves. Water thoroughly, and allow the excess water to drain from the pot, then dump the drip tray. The decorative foil around the pot holds water so removing the foil or putting holes through it at the pot's drainage holes, prevents the soil from staying too wet. Soil that is kept too wet causes the colour to fade in patches on the bracts and leaves."

Contact: *Shelley Barkley*
(403) 362-1305

Looking for that unique gift?

Every year the same question comes up – what do you buy for the farmer who has everything? Where can you find that something special, just a little out of the ordinary gift to give that 'hard-to-buy-for' rural Albertan? It may be worth your while to stop by and check out some of the book choices available at the local agriculture office.

There are dozens of agriculture publications, ranging from $3 to $30, that make terrific gifts. For example:

Alberta Yards and Gardens – ($15 plus GST) gives a fresh, unbiased look at what grows best in Alberta. It's packed with information needed to select ornamental trees and shrubs, lawns, small fruits and berries, flowers, vegetables, herbs and even water plants. Home owners, hobby gardeners, serious horticulturists and landscapers will find the book invaluable. It also gives tips and techniques for pruning, wintering roses, container gardening and attracting birds and butterflies.

Horse Health – ($15.00 plus GST) horse owners will love this book. It's packed with information, photographs and illustrations that give a thorough understanding of parasites, pests, infectious diseases, lameness and other common medical problems that can affect a horse's health. It shows how to prevent problems before they begin and how to treat problems and when to call the veterinarian.

Weeds of the Prairies – ($20.00 plus GST) full colour photos and illustrations detailing 112 weeds makes this the most complete work of its kind on the Canadian prairies. Weeds are color-coded by flower color for easy reference, and the full index makes it easy to find the species by common, scientific or family name. Charts on life cycle and habitat provide valuable information, and maps show how widespread particular weeds are. This 266-page book will make planning a weed control program easier and more effective. It can also help youngsters learn how to identify weeds.

Cont'd on page 4

Beekeeping in Western Canada – ($25.00 plus GST) experienced beekeepers and those just considering beekeeping, this book gives the information needed to manage honey bees successfully. Learn about the spring management of bees, winter feeding, honey extraction, honey bee health and marketing beeswax, pollen and honey crops. The provincial apiculturists in Canada's four western provinces packed this publication full of the best possible information on keeping bees in the west.

Pulse Crops in Alberta – ($25.00 plus GST) this award-winning publication is a must-have for anyone interested in pulse crops. Learn the basics about pulse production or get more specifics in full color pages on field pea, dry bean, lentil and fababean. Also included is information on some lesser known pulses in Alberta, such as chickpea, fenugreek, grasspea, lupin and soybean.

Growing Native Plants of Western Canada: common Grasses and Wildflowers – ($30.00 plus GST) through over 100 pages of text and photographs, this book takes an in-depth look at 48 species of native plants that have shown promise for ecological repair. It will help anyone interested in collecting, growing and commercially producing native plants.

These, along with many other book titles make wonderful gifts and are available at the publications office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development or any local Alberta Agriculture's district office.

Feel free to drop by your local Agriculture office or the Publications Office of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6. Orders can also be placed by calling toll-free 1-800-292-5697 or 427-0391 in Edmonton.

Please add $2 (plus GST) per order for shipping and handling.

Contact: *Publications Office*
(780) 427-0391

Greenhouse energy conservation workshops successful

Rapidly rising costs of natural gas and electricity necessitated organizing workshops for greenhouse growers of Alberta. The increases in natural gas and electricity prices directly affect the cost of production of all greenhouse crops, including vegetables, bedding plants, cut flowers, ornamentals and tree seedlings.

"The purpose of the workshops was to provide information to growers on all aspects of energy conservation and crop management practices which can help to reduce the cost of production," says Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza, greenhouse crops specialist, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development's Crop Diversification Centre North, Edmonton.

The workshops were held in Gull Lake near Lacombe and in Medicine Hat. Close to 200 growers attended these meetings. The topics discussed included: reasons for the current energy crunch in Alberta; economic impacts of rising energy costs on the greenhouse industry; review of energy requirements for Alberta greenhouses; options to reduce energy costs; and, relating crop management practices to different energy conservation techniques.

"The main message was to know the impact of these rising energy costs on cost of production of various crops and what are the possible alternatives to save energy, using alternative fuel sources like coal and how to increase production to pay for these rising costs," adds Mirza. "Through these workshops, growers were provided with proper information so that they can make right decisions."

Growers from B.C. and Saskatchewan also participated. The workshops were organized through the cooperation of Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association, Alberta Research Council, Alberta Financial Services Corporation, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Red-Hat Co-op and Pik-N-Pak.

Excellent written material is available based on the contents of these workshops. The cost of the binders is $30 (includes shipping and handling). Cheques are payable to the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association and requests should be mailed to:

Dr. M. Mirza
CDCN
RR #6
Edmonton, Alberta T5B 4K3

Contact: *Dr. Mohyuddin Mirza*
(780) 415-2303
<mohyuddin.mirza@gov.ab.ca>

Agri-News Briefs

Berry conference

The ***Annual Berry Production Conference & Workshop*** is being held at the Kananaskis Inn and Convention Centre, Kananaskis, on February 22 to 24, 2001. A series of talks will cover topics on marketing potential and production of black currants, wild black (choke) cherries, rhubarb, saskatoons and sea buckthorn. The Executive Chef and kitchen staff will be using a variety of fruits and fruit products in the menu during the Conference. Deadline for advanced registration is January 5, 2001. Advance registration rates are $300 per person, double occupancy (includes two days and two nights accommodation, all meals, beverages, conference rooms, taxes and gratuities), $375 per person, single occupancy. Registration after January 5 until February 5, 2001, add $50 to the advance registration rates. Registration at the door, add $100 to the advance registration rates. Day rates are also available. For more information, contact Sharon Faye, agrologist, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton, (780) 422-5326. Contacts from the Fruit Growers Society of Alberta: southern Alberta call John at (403) 327-9976, central Alberta call Garnett at (403) 742-5742 and in northern Alberta call Dave at (780) 361-8572.

Alberta Flock Benchmark 2000

According to data released at the 13th World Meat Congress, world sheep numbers have declined 11.2 per cent since 1990, but production has risen 6.2 per cent. To determine how Alberta's sheep production figures compare, the first Alberta Flock Benchmark 2000 survey is being distributed to all Alberta sheep producers. The project is being undertaken by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and is supported by the Alberta Sheep & Wool Commission. All production information collected and compiled will be kept in strict confidence. The information will be used: to establish benchmarks for production efficiency, management practices and animal health; to identify areas for improved production profitability; and to identify extension, technology transfer and research needs. Producers are asked to complete and return the Benchmark 2000 form by December 31, 2000. Producers who provide their name and address will receive a summary report of their individual flock information compared to the provincial averages. Provincial averages will also be made available through industry publications. As an incentive for participation, all producers who submit their information will have their name entered in a draw for several prizes. For more information, contact Wray Whitmore, sheep specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton, (780) 422-0575.

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December 18, 2000

Code for livestock operations updated

The code outlining technical standards for new and expanding livestock operations has been updated to provide greater protection of the environment while reducing potential nuisance from dust, odour and noise.

The ***2000 Code of Practice for Responsible Livestock Development and Manure Management*** replaces the *1995 Code of Practice for the Safe and Economic Handling of Animal Manures*. Advances in research and technology have been included, as well as input gathered through the public consultation process led by the Livestock Regulatory Stakeholder Advisory Group.

"Livestock developers and the public have been asking for clear standards for intensive livestock operations," says Ty Lund, Minister of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. "While we work toward a comprehensive provincial strategy, the updated Code provides clarity on the technical standards for siting and manure management."

The 2000 Code outlines technical standards on siting and manure management for new and expanding intensive livestock operations (ILO). The definition of an ILO remains the same: a permanent feedlot or covered facility: a minimum number of livestock, held at a density of 90 m2 or less, for more than 90 days.

Examples of an intensive livestock operation as defined in the Code would be:

- a 30 sow farrow to finish hog operation, or
- a 300 head beef feedlot, or
- a 5000 hen egg laying operation

Key changes to the Code include:

- enhanced standards for manure storage and application to prevent contamination of surface and groundwater
- enhanced requirements to reduce conflict with other land users
- requirements on manure application to allow better utilization of nutrients by crops.

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The Code has been updated to ensure technical standards for livestock operations are current in order to reduce environmental and health risks. As well, with livestock operations increasing in size as a reflection of the markets and with more people moving to rural areas, the potential for conflicts over land use and issues such as noise, odour and dust is increasing. The Code is intended to help reduce the potential for conflict through these technical standards.

Current provincial legislation ensure the protection of the water, air and soil quality as well as human health. They include the *Public Health Act*, the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*, the *Water Act* and the federal *Fisheries Act*, to name a few.

Beyond the updated Code, Alberta Agriculture is working with industry to develop beneficial management practices, environmental self-assessment and certification programs, peer review, nutrient management planning tools and continued research and technology development.

A committee, led by Albert Klapstein, MLA for Leduc, was recently appointed to review and make recommendations on issues specific only to approval processes, municipal and provincial roles and on-going monitoring. The committee will report back in spring 2001.

Municipalities have the jurisdiction over development applications. Alberta Agriculture has provided expertise on livestock development applications at a municipality's request, basing their recommendations on adherence to the 1995 Code. Alberta Agriculture staff will continue to provide this service now using the updated Code. Copies of the 2000 Code are available by following the links on the Alberta Agriculture website at <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca**>, or by calling 1-800-292-5697.

Contact: Michael Lohner *Morris Seiferling*
(780) 427-2137 *(780) 427-0674*

For toll-free calling outside of Edmonton, dial 310-0000

Food Safety Info Line extends holiday hours

Have you got questions about how to prepare that holiday turkey? Are you unsure just how far ahead it's safe to make the cream cheese dip? Give the Food Safety Info Line a call. Their **toll-free number is 1-800-892-8333**.

"During the holiday season when consumers get into cooking their holiday foods and entertaining, the professional home economists who staff the consumer hot line are prepared to answer their questions about safe handling, preparation and storage of all kinds of foods," says Jane Carlyle, coordinator with Food Safety Info Line.

From December 11 until December 20, the line's hours of service will be extended from Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. M.S.T. From December 21 to December 26, the home economists will be checking for messages and returning calls daily.

This extended service is being made possible thanks to the support of the Alberta Turkey Producers, the British Columbia Turkey Growers, the Saskatchewan Turkey Producers and Lilydale Foods who have recently joined the Food Safety Info Line's list of valued sponsors.

Also look for the free brochure ***Turkey Dinner, Made Easy*** in meat departments of food stores. It contains step-by-step instructions for proper turkey roasting and meal preparation.

The Food Safety Info Line is a not-for-profit organization that provides consumers with direct access to current, credible food safety information through the toll-free phone line, science based information resources and public education.

Contact: Jane Carlyle
(403) 287-0098

Completing the cycle: nutrient management

A newly released video entitled ***completing the cycle: Nutrient Management*** will be of interest to both livestock and crop operators. The video provides an overview of the nutrient management cycle and how producers can profit from proper nutrient management planning. The emphasis is on the importance of manure nutrients, and how they are key to offsetting fertilizer costs, gaining a market advantage, and protecting soil, water and air quality.

Both livestock and crop operations are part of the nutrient management cycle. Activities, from manure production, storage and application to crop and feed production to feeding livestock, affect the cycle. By preserving and using nutrients at all points in the cycle, operators convert waste management problems into advantages. Not only can operators realize increased profits and improved environmental stewardship, they can gain added bonuses of good neighbor relations and improved consumer confidence in the end-product.

"Nutrient management planning (NMP) is adopting practices that optimize economic profit of fertilizer and manure use, while protecting the environment," says Dr. Mohamed Amrani, nutrient management specialist, with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Edmonton. "Additional components of a complete NMP include storage site selection, odour control, spreader calibration, record keeping and emergency response plan. A NMP must be reviewed every year, and changes implemented when new information becomes available."

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As the video points out, this nutrient management model is no pie-in-the-sky theoretical concept. Across Alberta, many agricultural operators and farm managers working with cow-calf, hog, dairy, poultry and grain production, are successfully putting the science of nutrient management into practice. The video reviews a wide variety of livestock and crop operations that are successfully managing manure and nutrients in their operation through NMP.

Bernie Kotelko of Highland Feeders realizes that all components of his operation have value and he is capitalizing on that. "When we look at the bigger picture, it's part of our whole system, where we've got cattle in the pen, they're producing a nutrient, we're adding value to it with the composting process. We haul it out to our fields and it's nutrients for the crop that will feed our next pen of cattle," he says.

Brian and Mark Perkins run a combined hog/grain operation and produce much of their own hog feed. "One of the things that has happened over the last few years and has been the most significant change in the way that we're applying manure, is that we're working with neighbors," explains Perkins. "There are people that buy manure from us. We apply manure on their land on the same basis used when we apply it on our own land. We're now to the point where we don't have enough manure to meet the demand."

Bill Stewart, a cow-calf operator moved his winter feeding area to higher ground to improve manure management and reduce run off concerns. "Farming is a tough business, and we do want to preserve the environment, but there has to be some economic advantage. I really believe that moving my cow herd has some economic advantages," he says.

The video also includes discussions with experts on how to successfully use manure nutrients in crop rotations, carefully matching soil and manure test results to crop nutrient requirements, to provide crops with exactly what they need. Grazing management experts provide information on how to extend the grazing season and reduce manure handling.

Developing and implementing good nutrient management helps farmers and ranchers improve the bottom line and produce products in a safe and environmentally sound manner.

The video is available for sale from the Alberta Agriculture Publications Office, 7000 - 113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6, or by calling the toll-free line 1-800-292-5697. The cost is $10 per tape, plus shipping and handling, plus GST ($12.84 total). This video can also be borrowed free of charge from local Alberta Agriculture District Offices.

Contact:	*Dr. Mohamed Amrani*	*Therese Tompkins*
	(780) 422-9236	*(780) 427-3588*

$1 million scholarship program for agriculture

A new $1 million dollar scholarship/bursary program has been created through Agriculture, Food and Rural Development for any student in Alberta specializing in agricultural and agri-food studies leading to a certificate, college diploma, university degree or post graduate studies.

Tom Thurber, MLA for Drayton Valley – Calmar, presented a cheque on behalf of Ty Lund, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, to the 4-H Foundation of Alberta at a special ceremony Friday, November 24, 2000 at the 4-H Centre in Battle Lake. The Foundation will administer the program.

"This program is not only an investment in our students, it is in fact an investment in the future of the agriculture and agri-food industry," says Thurber. "The funding will help address one of the concerns of the agriculture industry, that manpower, or lack of it, has been identified as an impediment to the future development and growth of the industry."

"This funding will provide an incredible boost in attracting and recruiting students best suited to having an impact on the future of agriculture," says Diane Maull, Chair of the 4-H Foundation of Alberta. "The Foundation will also work closely with a special Advisory Group from industry and Alberta's post-secondary institutes to help select candidates for the awards who can provide the quickest and greatest influence in the industry. Preference will be given to students beyond the first year in a diploma program and beyond the second year in a degree program."

The mandate of the 4-H Foundation of Alberta is to receive and manage money on behalf of 4-H, provide environmental education and manage scholarship programs. The Foundation was formed as a non-profit organization in 1977. Further information on the new student agriculture awards program can be obtained from the 4-H Foundation of Alberta, RR #1, Westerose, Alberta TOC 2V0 or by calling the Foundation at (780) 682-2153.

Contact:	*Mahlon Weir*	*Marie McDonnell*
	4-H Branch	*Communications*
	Alberta Agriculture	*Alberta Agriculture*
	(780) 427-4463	*(780) 422-7678*

For toll- free calling outside of Edmonton, dial 310-0000

Berry marketing basics for food service

"Albertans interested in accessing the food service industry with Alberta grown berry products should keep the following seven tips for success in mind," says Kerry Engel, rural development specialist - business with Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development, Westlock.

1. **Plan Ahead** – do your market research. Starting to market a product the week before it is picked is not the way to do it. Develop a marketing strategy before you start planting.
2. **Know Your Customer** – traditional agriculture is production based with the philosophy *I will produce it and then find someone to buy it*. A different perspective is needed. You need a *market focus*. You need to understand who is buying the product, and you need to talk to them. Find out what the chefs want - then start producing! If you can explain how a particular product benefits the customer, you are market focused.
3. **Know Your Regulations** – talk to Alberta Health, Alberta Agriculture, marketing councils, and CFIA for regulations on producing, processing, packaging, labeling and transporting products. Check vegetable sales Acts. To sell products to food service within Alberta, you need to have the products processed in a provincially inspected facility, at the minimum.
4. **Differentiate Your Product** – decide what strategic advantage your product has. Is it regional, local or heritage? Identify what your product is and why it is valuable.
5. **Price it Right** – essential to your marketing plan are the costing and pricing strategies you develop. Understanding how a chef determines his prices and all the costs involved in your marketing chain will help you develop these strategies. A general rule in fine dining is food costs are 30 per cent of the menu price with vegetables representing about 15 to 20 per cent of that.
6. **Team up to Market** – many of the markets you uncover while investigating food service may be too big for one producer to supply. Co-operative marketing can be an alternative marketing strategy. Many berry producers aren't of sufficient size to work through a distributor. Not everyone wants to be or can be a marketer. Investigate working with specialty marketers and create a chef team. There is a growing trend in fine dining where chefs are serving the highest quality products according to season. They are discovering and encouraging farmers and ranchers to produce a steady supply of their pure, fresh-from-the-farm ingredients. Perhaps it's time you investigated this niche opportunity.
7. **Sign-up for Explore Food Service** – to learn more, call Kerry Engel at (780) 349-4465 and ask about the seminar **Explore Food Service, New Options for Heritage Berries**, being held on January 31, February 1, 21 and 22, 2001 in Sherwood Park. Over four days, six food service industry representatives will make presentations, three tours will be conducted, and attendees will receive enough information to start a food service marketing plan.

The program for this seminar focuses on food service opportunities for saskatoon, wild black (choke) cherry, currant, strawberry and raspberry producers and processors.

Contact: Kerry Engel
(780) 349-4465

Growing rural tourism: a landmark conference for Alberta

Rural Alberta is abound with interesting things to see and do. Just consider The Cowboy Trail, the Smoky Lake Pumpkin Festival, Grande Cache's Death Race, or the many market gardens, parks and lakes. At the same time, the travelling public is looking for new opportunities to explore and experience. They want to be entertained and educated, they want to taste, touch, see and feel, adventure, recreation, heritage and culture.

"Many travellers, Albertans and otherwise, still have no idea of the rich holiday getaway experience that can be found in rural Alberta," says Sharon Homeniuk, rural development specialist - business with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Stony Plain. "The question is, is rural Alberta ready for the growth of rural tourism? Do they understand the target market? Do they know how to package experiences to attract that market? Do they fully realize the potential in their own backyard?"

Growing Rural Tourism, an upcoming conference initiative of the Camrose Regional Exhibition, Alberta Economic Development, Travel Alberta, and Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, will be held in Camrose on February 13 and 14, 2001. The conference deals with bringing communities together, public and private sector alike, to learn how to work collectively to grow rural tourism in their own areas and how to turn vacationers' to the fun, friendliness, education and relaxation that rural Alberta offers.

"Highlights of the conference include a keynote address by Ed Mahoney, internationally recognized rural tourism expert from Michigan State University," adds Homeniuk. "Mahoney will kick off the conference by showing how working from an initial vision to a finely tuned marketing plan can, and has been done right by communities that have pulled together and succeeded. Learn how individual contribution can lead to success in growing rural tourism for your business and community."

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The event provides the opportunity to sit down with community counterparts and work on clearly identifying target markets and discovering a community's best kept secrets. Bill MacMillan, of Equus Consulting, will lead groups through an energizing and thought provoking process to conclusions they never knew were possible.

Barb Quarry, tourism manager for the City of Stratford, will be on hand to explore successful Ontario initiatives like *Get Out of Town*, the *Huron Harvest Trail* and *Rural Routes*. Many inspiring success stories from Alberta will also be presented to challenge participants' thinking.

For more information or to register for the conference, contact the **Growing Rural Tourism** conference office at (780) 488-9497, toll-free at 1-866-488-9497, or e-mail at <**millmgt@aol.com**>. More information and a registration form are also available on line at <**www.tourismtogether.com**> or <**www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/mgmt/diversification/index**> then click on agri-tourism.

Contact: *Sharon Homeniuk*
(780) 963-6101

Agri-News Briefs

Price it right!

Expanding your business potential? The ***Price It Right!*** workshop takes the processor behind the scenes in retail sales to focus on the issues that play a part in the retail buyer's decision to carry your food product. The workshop, being offered in Airdrie on March 14, 2001, will take an in-depth look at price and pricing strategies. The seminar will give entrepreneurs the chance to find out about obtaining a listing with a distributor, wholesaler or retailer. Attendees are encouraged to bring questions. Strategies, ideas and tactics will be shared that can be immediately applied to businesses of any size. Registration fee is $53.50 and registration deadline is March 9, 2001. For further information or to register, contact Suzanne Tenold, agri-food development specialist with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Airdrie, (403) 948-8504.

Market opportunities in the beef industry

Pursuing Market Opportunities in the Beef Industry is a one-day workshop designed for beef producers and processors who want to learn how to access and identify niche market opportunities. Highlights of this workshop include identifying a market focus; what feedlot buyers want; and, what packers really want. The day will also include a producer panel where experiences will be shared and discussed. The workshop is being held in four locations across the province in 2001. Time of each workshop is 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

February 6 – Airdrie
February 7 – Red Deer
February 8 – Wetaskiwin
February 9 – Coronation

For further information or to register, contact 1-800-387-6030.

2001 Environmental Stewardship Award

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) presented Alvin and Ann Kumlin with the ACC's highest award for stewardship. The Kumlin's Lazy J Ranch received the 2001 Environmental Stewardship Award (ESA) at the ACC annual general meeting. For five generations, the Kumlin family have ranched along the Jumping Pound Creek, west of Calgary. Their environmentally friendly management practices, such as managing cattle access through electric fencing, using portable feeders in the winter to prevent manure build-up in any one area and keeping it from entering waterways and working with Trout Unlimited Canada to wrap trees to prevent damage from beavers, have helped ensured the health of this important waterway. The Kumlin's host tour groups and share their knowledge and strategies for maintaining the environment while operating a successful cattle operation. Their goal is to leave healthy rangeland, a clean water supply and better cattle for the next generation. The ACC presents the ESA to a deserving farm family each year. The ACC is now accepting nominations for the 2002 ESA. All cattle producers are encouraged to either enter or nominate another producer who qualifies. Deadline for nominations is July 1, 2001. The winner will be announced at the ACC annual general meeting in Edmonton, December 2001. Nomination forms and further information is available from the ACC office at (403) 275-4400.

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